



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AGAINST VIOLENCE AND FOR THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN



2023

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GENERAL FRAMEWORK

Role and missions of Defence for Children International Belgium

Defence for Children International (DCI) Belgium is the Belgian section of Defence for Children International, which has been active since 1979 and has national sections in more than 30 countries.

DCI-Belgium was founded in 1991 and joined the international movement in 1992. Our aim is to **advance, protect and defend children's rights in all areas**, particularly those set out in international declarations and instruments, including the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and its additional protocols.

Our priority areas of intervention are children and justice, children in migration and the protection of children against all forms of violence, including in education. These are the areas in which the situation is particularly worrying in Belgium and internationally, and in which the association's expertise has been most specifically developed. This does not, of course, preclude intervention in other areas, should the need arise.

DCI-Belgium informs and raises awareness among political decision-makers, field workers in contact with children, children themselves and the general public through campaigns, conferences, research, publications and other events.

DCI-Belgium trains many professionals from different sectors (childhood, youth, justice, social work, education...) to strengthen their skills through training courses, pedagogical tools, manuals, practical guides and any other relevant means.

To protect and defend children's rights, DCI-Belgium calls on the authorities to ensure that Belgium respects the rights of all children and, if necessary, takes legal action before Belgian or international bodies to put an end to systematic violations.

The principles that DCI-Belgium intends to defend are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in other national and international standards designed to promote children's rights, as well as in the statutes of Defence for Children International and in documents adopted by the International Movement dealing with issues of child protection, ethics and non-discrimination.

DCI-Belgium's values are based on the fact that children are subjects of law in their own right, with special rights that everyone must respect, everywhere and at all times.

Our Child Safeguarding Policy is based on the following principles:

- Children have the right to live free from all forms of violence. Every child has a non-negotiable right to protection. Children must be given the means to be protected and to claim this right.
- Children are individuals with their own voices, choices and feelings.
- The best interests of the child must always come first, especially in the context of DCI-Belgium's activities.
- All children have the right to develop, at their own pace, whatever their individual needs and circumstances.
- The responsibility of DCI staff and partners is to protect and promote the well-being of children and the full respect of their rights.
- Child protection can only truly exist when it is a responsibility fully and completely shared by all; DCI staff and partners have a collective and individual responsibility to protect children. This Policy is therefore developed, implemented and reviewed in consultation with DCI Belgium's stakeholders (employees, volunteers, Board of Directors, General Assembly, children...).
- To make this protection a reality in DCI Belgium's actions and mandate, staff and partners must be able to access the necessary information and develop the skills required to respect and enforce the Child Safeguarding Policy.

In addition, everyone working for or with DCI-Belgium is aware of the organisation's social and environmental impact. They are committed to doing their utmost to develop and assume this responsibility.

Last but not least, as a member of an international organization, DCI-Belgium has a responsibility to the International Secretariat of Defence for Children International in matters of child safeguarding, and cannot **adopt standards lower than those adopted internationally.**

How and when is DCI-Belgium in contact with children?

DCI-Belgium interacts directly and indirectly with children on many levels. Direct contact means being in the physical presence of one or more children as part of the organization's activities, whether this contact is occasional or regular, short or long term. Indirect contact is a broader term, encompassing all situations of contact with a child that do not involve direct contact. Indirect contact includes situations where there is non-physical contact with one or more children (e.g. through a third party). Even indirect contact can have an impact on children, and therefore entails a responsibility to protect.

Here are the main situations of contact with children that may be encountered at DCI-Belgium:

- Workshops and activities with children as part of projects (e.g. awareness-raising and creative workshops).

- Direct contact with children at particular risk during activities (children in migration, in contact with the law, in care, with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, etc.).
- Shared moments alongside activities (e.g. a night in shared accommodation during a weekend activity).
- Opportunities for young people to get involved, in particular with groups of young experts, the European network's consultative committees, activities linked to the participation pole...
- Communication (e.g. calling on children via social networks, interviews, creating podcasts, taking photos and videos...)
- Study visits (e.g. visits to children's centres in Tunisia)
- Office calls from children or their parents
- Project monitoring and evaluation and management of sensitive data
- In the context of advocacy (e.g. during meetings with other young people, or meetings between young people and politicians)

Scope of the document

The fundamental aim of the Child Safeguarding Policy presented here is to preserve and promote the protection and well-being of children within the framework of the association's activities, both internally and externally. It sets out the various child safeguarding measures in force, as well as the procedures for implementing this policy, and the roles and responsibilities of each individual. It also includes helpful resources to understand this policy, an implementation strategy, and evaluation and monitoring measures.

The measures set out to protect children apply to all those involved in DCI-Belgium's activities (all employees, administrators, consultants, volunteers, trainees) and cover all the association's activities. This document is co-constructed with all these people. Particular attention is paid to the importance of involving children in the process of creating and evaluating this Policy. **The measures set out in this CSP also apply to the private life of DCI-Belgium employees¹.** A specific section is devoted to partnerships (see table of contents). DCI coordinates the Child Friendly Justice In Action European network, which brings together some thirty members in Europe. **The network is also subject to the principles set out in this document.**

This document therefore aims at providing a framework of principles, codes, standards and guidelines to enable individual and organizational practices to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and best interests of the child.

¹All these provisions apply to private life, provided they do not conflict with the national legal framework.

It serves as a reference for DCI-Belgium's activities. While its primary interest is preventive (establishing a healthy, positive environment and demonstrating commitment), it can also play a reactive role (helping to detect and react to situations where children's rights are being violated). **It provides the entire organization with a common frame of reference**, a common guide to child safeguarding, but also protects its members against abusive allegations.

The entire DCI-Belgium team is responsible for its proper implementation. The contact points/responsible persons named in the Procedures section accept particular responsibility for this Policy by – among other things - receiving requests, questions or concerns from people taking part in the organization's activities.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Compliance with this Code - although not exhaustive - should create an environment conducive to the safety and well-being of all, respecting children's physical and mental integrity, their space and their privacy. **A Code of Conduct also enables children to know what to expect from adults and other children**, and to distinguish between "normal" acts and those that constitute violence, whatever their form. It provides a framework for adults to behave towards children, and for children to behave towards each other.

This Code of Conduct applies to all persons involved in the activities of DCI-Belgium (employees, directors, consultants, volunteers, trainees). All these rules **also apply in the virtual sphere** (internet, telephone, social networks, etc.) and **in the private lives of these persons**².

All of these persons commit themselves to:

- **Take seriously their individual responsibility** to protect all children from violence and to promote their well-being, to give the highest priority to respecting children, their well-being, their physical, mental and sexual integrity, and their fundamental rights, including their right to participation.
- **Treat all children without distinction.**
- **Avoid any action or practice likely to cause harm to children, and take all possible measures to protect children with whom they are in direct or indirect contact** (for example, when an activity is carried out, all measures must be taken to ensure that it will not cause harm to the children taking part - see risk analysis section). Our organization does not tolerate any form of violence against children, even if a specific form of violence is not (yet) explicitly sanctioned by national legislation.
- **Discuss** any child safeguarding concerns **immediately** with the child safeguarding focal point. It is never appropriate to wait or take time to reflect when a child may be at risk.
- **Plan activities in advance** to use all means to prevent violence. Make sure the risk analysis takes into account age, gender, needs and abilities of all participants.
- **Use the two-adult rule** because it: (1) significantly reduces the risk of an incident; (2) protects against false accusations; (3) reduces liability and a possible claim for negligence; and (4) allows for extra help in the event of an accident or emergency.

² All these provisions apply to privacy, provided they do not conflict with the national legal framework.

- **To help create and/or maintain an environment in which children are listened to and feel empowered and respected as individuals.** To achieve this, it is necessary to recognize, respect and protect the notion of dignity attached to each child as a holder of rights and as a unique and precious human being with an individual personality, needs, interests and privacy.
- **Be mindful of what children say,** have read and understood the advice on handling disclosures (see table of contents) and react appropriately.
- **Be a positive role model,** treating everyone fairly and apologizing for mistakes. Behave appropriately, setting an example of good behaviour, refraining from inappropriate jokes or comments.
- Understand that the guiding principle in addressing any concerns about safeguarding and protecting children is that **the child's safety and well-being must always come first.** No action you take should put the child at risk. You must do everything in your power to remove the child from immediate danger and ensure that he or she is comfortable.
- **Be aware of the power imbalance between adults and children,** and commit to never abusing the power and influence you have by virtue of your position.
- **Inform children of their rights,** teach them what is acceptable in adults' behaviour towards them, what is inappropriate or unacceptable, and what they can do if something bothers them.
- **Maintain discretion and respect children's privacy,** while complying with national child protection laws regarding the reporting of abuse (in particular the [Décret maltraitance](#)).

They must never:

- **Act in a manner likely to be violent or to expose children to a risk of violence,** in particular:
 - Striking, physically assaulting or physically abusing children, or threatening to do so.
 - Use inappropriate, offensive or abusive language, suggestions or advice.
 - Act in a way that shames, humiliates, belittles children, or perpetrates any other form of psychological violence, discrimination, differential treatment or favouring certain children to the exclusion of others.
 - Engage in physically inappropriate or sexually provocative behaviour.
 - Engaging in sexual activity or a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority/consent. Under no circumstances can ignorance of the child's age be an acceptable justification. This rule applies both to adults and to young people themselves, unless they are both between 16 and 18 (taking into account the law and consent).
 - Exposing children to inappropriate images, films, music and/or websites, including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and/or violence.
 - Asking a child to perform tasks that are clearly inappropriate for his or her age and abilities (e.g. asking a child with a physical disability to perform a physical activity that puts him or her in difficulty or danger).

- Spending the night alone with one or more children benefiting from the organization's programs and who are not part of their family, whether in a compound, hotel, project premises, other accommodation or elsewhere.
- **Tolerating or participating in unlawful, dangerous or abusive behaviour towards a child,** including allowing allegations or complaints made by a child or concerns about a child's welfare to go unrecorded; not acting on allegations or complaints made by a child or an adult on a child's behalf.

Commitment form

I, _____, agree to abide by the DCI-Belgium Code of Conduct. I understand that any breach of the DCI-Belgium Child Protection Code of Conduct will be reported and appropriate action will be taken in accordance with existing policies and procedures.

Organization:

Name:

Title/Role:

Date:

Signature:

Informing children

All children who come into direct or indirect contact with DCI-Belgium through its activities must be aware of their right to be protected from violence.

To this end, they must be systematically provided with a version of the CSP (Child Safeguarding Policy) adapted to their age and level of understanding (see appendix). Where it is not possible to inform them directly, their legal guardians must be fully informed.

When working with children and/or young people over a longer period of time, it's important to take the time to explain the content of this Policy, and to discuss the network to turn to in the event of a problem (see appendices).

How to inform children?

During any activity, children must be informed of the protective measures put in place for them, and be able to give feedback in the most appropriate way possible. At least one of the people leading the activity must be designated to do this from the outset.

To do this, you can use the elements presented in appendix 9. Your presentation should explain:

- What violence is, what behaviour is allowed and what is forbidden by other children and adults;
- How to react if facing violence ;
- Who to talk to, through adapted games and activities.

How can we give children the opportunity to give feedback?

You need to allow children to give feedback right from the start, throughout the activity, and after it has taken place. To give children the opportunity to give feedback, we suggest the following:

- Set up an advice box for anonymous written reports
- Set up a "talking corner" to breathe and/or talk to an adult
- Set up games that allow children to indicate their needs so that everything runs as smoothly as possible, e.g. "If I had a magic wand, I'd want the activity to go like this..."

It is essential to adapt the approach chosen to the age and abilities of the group.

RISK ANALYSIS

Risk analysis is a necessary step to:

- Ask ourselves: **do the activities we organize present risks for children?**
- **Understand the types of risks linked to activities**, whether they take place inside or outside the organization, and the consequences (damage, harm), but also the possibilities of finding out about violence taking place outside the organization (family environment, school, etc.).
- **Distinguish between "general" and "specific" risks**, i.e. those that exist at all times and those that are specifically linked to or generated by the organization's activities.
- **Anticipate potential problems**, i.e. reduce possible risks, but also know how to react in the event of difficulty. **How can we respond to risks, reduce or even eliminate them?**

Risk management is a **four-stage process**: 1) identifying risks 2) examining current responses 3) where necessary, supplementing responses (in terms of both prevention and reaction) 4) post-activity, revisiting the risk analysis to assess its implementation and make any necessary adjustments.

Ideally, this risk analysis should be carried out as a team and, when working with partners, with them. Allow time for the children to participate in the analysis, adapting the activity to their level, age and ability. **It's important to keep an eye out for overlooked or new risks, and to adapt the analysis accordingly.** It is also important to take into account the specific risks associated with the profile of the children taking part (e.g. children with disabilities, children in migration, etc.). For this reason, **it's best to know the children's profile before carrying out the analysis.**

In order to list the risks to which children may be exposed, we need to consider the following points in particular:

- Risks related to the organization's facilities, infrastructure and physical environment
- Risks related to transport, travel and holidays
- Data and communication risks (see dedicated chapter)
- Risks associated with the conduct of activities, including what happens before and after an activity (use of changing rooms, for example).
- Risks relating to the recruitment, training and/or behaviour (see code of conduct) of adults affiliated with the organization, as well as any adults involved in the activity.
- Risks related to children's behaviour and potential expectations
- Risks related to parental behaviour
- Risks associated with the location(s), particularly if frequented by the general public

In your analysis, be careful not to focus solely on purely safety-related risks (first-aid kit, injury, mosquitoes, etc.), but also to take into account the more complex, less obvious risks of violence. It's all about thinking about activities from different angles. Where do they take place? Who takes part? What risks do they represent for children? Can these risks cause slight, moderate or serious harm? Are these risks frequent? What action has been taken to address these risks, and what remains to be done?

Risk management must take place at different levels:

- ✓ the organizational level (inherent in your structure, governance, location, staff, activities in general - linked, for example, to the way child protection is integrated into your strategy, the way management acts in child protection matters, the physical infrastructure, etc.).
- ✓ program, project and activity level (i.e. specific to individual programs or activities - for example, if you're organizing a workshop with children over several days, involving travel, different ages, groups of children, but also in the context of advocacy, management, communication...)
- ✓ external or environmental risks, depending on needs, e.g. a climatic emergency, a more hostile government policy towards children in migration... For example, if we know that we're carrying out an activity with children who haven't received a permanent residence permit in a political context where it may be difficult for them to obtain one, it's important to take into account the risk that they may think the activity will help them obtain a residence permit, and to discuss this with them so as not to give them false illusions and to be clear about our mandate.

The risk analysis matrix is available at <Y:\DEI-Bel\Gestion\Politique protection DEI- B\Analyses de risques> and is presented as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	PROJET	Description du risque	Probabilité du risque	Impact potentiel sur l'enfant	Mesures prises pour réduire le risque	Mesures encore à prendre pour réduire le risque	Suivi à posteriori
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							

To help you understand how to fill it, please refer to page 11 of the Keeping Children Safe CSP Development Guide³. You'll also find some examples of analyses already completed in <Y:\DEI-Bel\Gestion\Politique protection DEI-B\Analyses de risques> [Analyses de risques effectuées](#).

For each risk analysis carried out, please add a contact person, even if the analysis was carried out as a group.

³ <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KCS-Developing-Child-Safeguarding-200218.pdf>.

STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

“Staff” includes all employees, volunteers and trainees. This section must therefore be applied to them in its entirety.

Recruitment

All the above-mentioned people, especially if they are likely to be in direct contact with children, must undergo thorough checks as part of the recruitment process.

The aim of these processes is twofold: to reduce the risk of hiring staff who do not jeopardize children's right to protection and well-being, and to deter ill-intentioned applicants.

Failure to comply with the Child Safeguarding Policy is systematically grounds for a warning or disciplinary sanction, which may go as far as termination of the employment contract, including for serious misconduct.

DCI-Belgium undertakes to plan recruitment processes in advance so as to be able to take into account the CSP and in particular the following criteria:

- All job offers produced by DCI-Belgium **must mention the obligation to respect the CSP, to produce a criminal record extract** and the fact that the recruitment process will include verification of these conditions. They must also mention the **future employee's responsibilities in terms of child safeguarding**.
- **Contact at least two of the previous employers (if not, then two referees)**. Contact them in writing and ensure that there have been no child safeguarding concerns in previous positions.
- **Obtain and scrutinize information contained in applications:** resolve any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies in employment history (e.g. reasons for termination of contract). DCI BE may contact a former employer to verify any information provided.
- When interviewing, always ensure that the candidate has read the Child Safeguarding Policy, and **include one or two questions on child protection**. Some examples are given below.
- **If the person is selected, make sure he or she** 1) signs a commitment form to the Child Safeguarding Policy, including the 2) Code of Conduct commitment form; 3) provides a model criminal record (Model 2) dated no more than 15 days prior to the date of hire⁴.

Here are some examples of child protection questions that can be asked during an interview:

1. Have you ever been arrested or convicted of an offence against a child?
2. In your opinion, what are the most important steps an NGO working with and for children can take to prevent violence?
3. Why is child safeguarding important for NGOs working on children's rights?
4. What makes an NGO working with and for children a safe and caring place?
5. What would you do if you were concerned about a colleague's behaviour towards children?
6. What would you do if you were concerned about a child's behaviour?
7. Can you spot the signs that a child has been or is being abused? What are these signs?
8. In your opinion, what are staff members' responsibilities when it comes to protecting children?

Training

It is essential to develop and nurture the skills and understanding needed to protect children within the organization. This ensures that staff members understand the importance of child safeguarding, are able to respect it and apply its principles. It is important that all staff and others in direct contact with children are aware of situations that present risks, and that they are able to react appropriately to these risks or refer to a member of the DCI team. Staff must help build an environment in which children are able to identify unacceptable behaviour, and in which they are able to discuss their rights and concerns.

Initial training

All new hires or agreements (internships, voluntary work, etc.) must be accompanied by initial training. **Within three months of taking up their duties**, all DCI-Belgium staff must receive training in the principles of child safeguarding. The content of this training aims to address the elements of the Child Safeguarding Policy and potential risk situations in relation to the worker's tasks, as well as the responses to be made. It also enables participants to learn how to detect and react to situations of violence, whatever their nature. It concludes with a short knowledge test (see appendices).

⁴ On very rare occasions, it may not be possible to receive the criminal record on time (e.g., a local authority requesting a delay, or a very short period of time or last-minute recruitment). In such cases, a declaration on honour must be signed (see model in appendix).

Ideally, this training is given by someone who has recently benefited from it (if applicable), in collaboration with one of the child safeguarding focal points. In the event that the last person to have benefited from it is unable to give it, one of the child safeguarding focal point will take on this role.

Continuing education

Ongoing training for all staff is provided through regular reminders of the principles of child safeguarding and clear notification of any changes or clarifications made at dedicated quarterly meetings.

It also takes place:

- Through their role as trainers of new recruits, on one occasion during their professional contract (except for protective duties);
- During the annual evaluation meeting. This meeting takes place once a year, according to a fixed schedule, with the management of DCI-Belgium. Its main purpose is to discuss the past year and to enable a mutual professional assessment. In the annual meeting guide (see appendices), a number of questions are included to assess whether the employee's understanding of the Safeguarding Policy is still clear and complete; to inform of any changes or additions; and to carry out a new risk assessment if the employee's tasks have changed or are in the process of changing.

Board members and consultants

When a board member (administrator) joins DCI-Belgium his or her candidacy must be thoroughly examined, and they must commit, like the staff, to 1) sign a form of commitment vis--vis the Child Safeguarding Policy 2) sign more specifically the form of commitment to comply with the Code of Conduct 3) provide a criminal record (Model 2) dating no more than 15 days prior to the date of admission to the Governing Body.

When working with consultants, there are two cases to consider:

- If the consultant is likely to come into direct contact with children as part of his/her work with DCI-Belgium, then all the principles applicable to the hiring of personnel apply (including training).
- If the consultant will have no direct contact with children (graphic designer, translator, IT specialist, etc.), we simply inform the person of the obligation to respect DCI-Belgium's Child Safeguarding Policy. This policy, and a link to it, must be included in the employment agreement.

The rules governing consultancy also apply to any visitor to the premises, to a project, event or activity with children.

Working with partners

As a general rule, DCI-Belgium will take care not to associate with partners whose values differ from those set out in its Child Safeguarding Policy and, in particular, would be in contradiction with the principles of respect, non-discrimination, best interests and absence of violence.

While recognizing their independence, DCI-Belgium expects its partners to respect its Child Safeguarding Policy and, in particular, its code of conduct. The only possible exception to this clause is if the partner has a more stringent Child Safeguarding Policy than that of DCI-Belgium, in which case the latter may take precedence.

When establishing a partnership, DCI-Belgium must ensure that its partner has understood its Child Safeguarding principles (via a short training course⁵) and signed its Code of Conduct.

When working with partners, DCI understands the importance of determining which organization is responsible for all aspects of child safeguarding, from design and planning to implementation and monitoring, and for taking action in the event of any concerns or incidents. To this end, when joint activities or projects are planned with a partner, **a collaboration agreement⁶ will also be systematically signed by all parties concerned, clarifying roles and responsibilities with regard to child safeguarding.** This agreement does not prevent DCI or the partner(s) from complying with their own reporting obligations, and from referring any problems to the competent authorities in the event of disagreement over the appropriate course of action.

The person in charge of the partnership at DCI-Belgium must also ensure that:

- The partner has understood and **will apply the two-adult rule**
- Focal points are clearly identified in both organizations
- That those responsible for informing children about their safeguarding during the activity are identified
- That the risk analysis was carried out jointly

DCI-Belgium expects the highest standards of professional ethics from its partners. In particular, DCI-Belgium insists on the principles of freedom and honesty in the collection and dissemination of information, and the use of appropriate, accurate and non-judgmental language. **DCI-Belgium reserves the discretionary right to refuse or terminate any partnership deemed inappropriate, even after the partnership has begun.**

⁵ Provided either to those taking part in the activity or to management, depending on the context. Training materials and the Code of Conduct can be found in folder [Y:\DEI-Bel\ManagementDCI Protection Policy-Partnerships](#).

⁶ An example can be found in the same file as the training and Code of Conduct.

PROCEDURES: DEALING WITH VIOLENCE

Procedures are understood to be the processes for reporting and responding to observed or suspected violence against a child and/or breaches of DCI-Belgium's CSP. The aim of these procedures is to ensure that, in the event of an incident, immediate and appropriate measures are taken in the best interests of the child, in order to treat the child with dignity and protect him or her from harm.

Within DCI-Belgium, two people are the main points of contact for the Child Safeguarding Policy. These are the reference persons. **The main point of contact must necessarily be informed of any incident occurring or being observed within the framework of DCI-Belgium's activities.** If this person is absent, or if there is any doubt as to his or her involvement in acts of violence against a child, the secondary point of contact must be contacted.

This in no way detracts from the individual's responsibility to react in the face of violence. Everyone involved in activities with children should be alert to any signs of violence, and report any concerns they may have.

MAIN POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Emmanuelle Vacher

Position: Child Protection Project Manager

Contact: emmanuelle.vacher@defensedesenfants.be

SECONDARY CONTACT POINT

Name: Vanessa Buvens

Position: Program Coordinator

Contact: vanessa.buvens@defensedesenfants.be

If in doubt about the potential involvement of the two contact points in acts of violence, please contact Andrea Salcedo, member of the Board of Directors (contact on the hard drive).

Signs of violence

Please note that this list of signs is not exhaustive. Some children may be victims of violence and show none of these signs, just as some children may show several of these signs without actually being victims of violence. To determine whether or not this is a case of violence requiring intervention, we invite you to exercise caution, to be attentive to a cluster of signs, to potential changes and not to remain alone with your doubts.

Possible behavioral and emotional signs

- Crying, moaning, screaming more than usual.
- Unusual clinging or attachment to caregivers.
- Frequent mood swings.
- Refusing to leave "safe" places.
- Difficulty sleeping or, on the contrary, constant sleep.
- Fear or refusal to go home or contact parents.
- Loss of conversational ability, bladder control and other developmental regressions.
- Show knowledge of or interest in age-inappropriate sexual acts.
- Fear of certain people, places or activities, or of being attacked.
- Avoid family and friends or, in general, stay away.
- Depression (chronic sadness), crying or emotional numbness.
- Nightmares or sleep disorders.
- Problems at school or avoidance of school.
- Showing anger or expressing difficulties in relationships with peers, fighting with others, disobedience or disrespect.
- Adopt avoidance behavior, including distancing yourself from family and friends.
- Self-destructive behavior (drugs, alcohol, self-mutilation).
- Changes in school results.
- Suicidal thoughts or tendencies.
- Sudden onset of language disorders.
- Touching intimate parts a lot.
- Constantly putting yourself down.
- Delayed development at various levels.

An adult's behavior can also be **indicative of** violence. Here are a few examples:

- Insults, labels or publicly humiliates the child
- Threatens to harm the child or forces the child to witness violence
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child
- Involves the child in "adult problems", such as separation problems
- Does not meet the child's basic needs, such as feeding, care...
- Does not enrol the child in school or tolerates absenteeism apparently without valid reason
- Regularly leaves child at home alone (infant or child too young)
- Systematically puts own needs ahead of those of the child
- Is very vague about the details of the cause of a child's injury, with a shifting narrative
- Frequently blames the child
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others (and/or in private)
- Is jealous of the child's relationships with peers or other adults
- Exerts excessive control over the child
- Displays to a child physical contact or affection that appears to be of a sexual nature or has sexual connotations.

Remember: some of these signs are not proof of violence, and can sometimes be explained by the difficult life situation of a parent who needs help above all else. Nonetheless, they should raise a red flag.

In case of immediate danger

For all cases requiring immediate medical attention, a first-aid kit must always be available (at the workplace and/or when traveling). It must include, as a minimum:

- ✓ A forehead thermometer ;
- ✓ A box of individual sterile compresses;
- ✓ Plasters;
- ✓ Hypoallergenic adhesive dressings;
- ✓ Compression bandages;
- ✓ Scissors;
- ✓ An emergency hemostatic pad (to stop bleeding) ;
- ✓ A bottle of 70° alcohol and/or disinfectant (Chlorhexidine);
- ✓ Single-dose eye saline ;
- ✓ Instant cold pack (be careful to insulate skin - risk of frostbite);
- ✓ Disposable gloves (mandatory for all treatments) ;
- ✓ An isothermal blanket.

It should be checked and renewed regularly. All other medication is excluded (medication is never harmless and can cause undesirable effects). DCI-Belgium is also responsible for ensuring that, when working with children, at least one of its workers is trained in first aid (initial training to be reviewed in accordance with current standards).

The following workers are currently trained in first aid (certified and up-to-date training):
Emmanuelle Vacher, Anna Rodriguez, Susanna Tuccio and Adèle Dachy.

In the event of physical conflict

In the event of physical conflict, there is always a danger for the children involved (even if they are only witnesses).

The right reflexes:

1. Remove children from the situation
2. Assess danger and provide immediate protection (e.g. medical care)
3. Ensure that children are provided with information about what has happened (appropriate, in their own language, including where to turn for help or to make a complaint).
4. Help children to calm down (group exercises, discussion, mediation...)
5. A posteriori, record it in the incident register and report it to the focal point

If a child behaves suddenly in a way you don't understand (extremely aggressive reaction, sudden amorphousness, panic...), there's no point in trying to reason with them, as they're temporarily incapable of doing so. Instead, try:

- Interventions to regain contact (child no longer responding)
 - Maintain eye contact (unless it's unpleasant)
 - Call by name in a calm, clear voice
 - Name what you're doing (for example, put your hand on your shoulder)
 - Ask people to name concrete objects in the room
- Interventions to reduce stress (aggressive children)
 - Naming/mirroring emotions
 - Breathing exercise
 - Release energy (go out for a while)
- Containment interventions (child panicking)
 - Paraphrase (repeat more calmly what the child is saying, in other words)
 - Don't go into sensory details
 - Link with the here and now by naming the current safety situation

In the event of suspected violence

In case you suspect a violent situation:

1. **Never be left alone with your doubts.** Share them with the main contact point, in writing via the reporting form (see point 2). If you feel more comfortable, you can first speak to the contact point verbally and/or by telephone. If you have any doubts about the potential involvement of both contact points in acts of violence, you should contact a member of the Board of Directors.
2. **Report suspicions in the incident register.** The incident register is accessible via an online form⁷. In the event of a person reporting an

⁷ https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIXjOQiva73CF9VmaxpAUA28Glv1DrRop26GS9Z27qh1JdzA/viewform?usp=sf_link.

If an incident occurs and you do not have access to this register, one of our contact points will have to fill it in or give you access to it.

Only in the event of immediate danger requiring an instant reaction (outside of conflict; for example, at the end of a weekend activity, a child tells you she/he doesn't want to go home because her/his parents are physically abusing her/him): try to reach the focal point by telephone. If this is not possible, take appropriate protective measures (e.g. contact the police or authorities).

In the event of a disclosure

Listening

During activities with children, they may talk about situations they have experienced that will raise questions, or even concern you. It's important to anticipate potential reports, and to think ahead about the follow-up that can be put in place. We advise you to put in place a "message box" during activities, and to introduce it beforehand by explaining that children can leave a message (anonymous or not) addressed to you. This ensures a means of communication for the children if they feel the need (to ask a question, share a concern in writing, etc.).

If the child talks about violence/claims to be a victim explicitly or anecdotally in a group:

- Take into account group dynamics and the objective of the activity.
- Answer in a general way for everyone, protecting the child from exposure to the group, not stigmatizing or talking specifically about it. We recommend the shift technique (not starting directly from the child's situation, but generalizing).
- Reflect on the need for an interruption (a break), offer a space to talk.
- Offer the child a space for discussion after the activity (or during a break), respecting the following principles:
 - Listen to the child with compassion and calm. Welcome the child's words ("I understand that something painful has happened, and that you might like to discuss it"). Be non-judgmental.
 - Ask only the general questions necessary to identify the problem, without conducting an interrogation.
 - Ensure the child's immediate safety, if necessary.
 - Be honest and don't promise secrecy, but rather explain what you're going to do (if you need to tell the school principal, the child's teacher, etc.). Take the time to make the child feel safe.
 - Consider going back on your initial reaction if it doesn't seem appropriate.

Reacting

1. **Never be alone with your doubts.** Share them with the main contact point, in writing using the reporting form (see appendices). If you have any doubts about the potential involvement of both contact points in acts of violence, you should contact a member of the Board.
2. **Report suspicions in the incident register.** The incident register **is accessible via an online form**⁸. Should a person report an incident and not have access to this register, one of the contact points will be asked to fill it in or provide access.

Only in the event of immediate danger requiring an immediate response (outside of conflict): try to reach the focal point by telephone. If this is not possible, take appropriate protective measures (e.g. contact the police or authorities).

It is important to note that anyone within the scope of the policy who reports a problem will not be subject to any retaliatory or disciplinary action if the report is made in good faith, with a legitimate concern for the welfare of the child. While the safety of children is always the primary concern, DCI-Belgium will follow the KCS⁹ guidelines for responding to malicious allegations¹⁰.

Obligations of contact points

In general, **the contact points are responsible for ensuring that the CSP is implemented and kept up to date.** They are also the first people to be able to provide help and answers to any questions on child safeguarding from people taking part in DCI Belgium activities. They must have a watchdog role (monitoring the incident register, checking that risk analyses are carried out, etc.) and ensure that the CSP is easily accessible and known to the children with whom DCI-Belgium works. Finally, the contact points must keep themselves informed and train the team.

In the event of a shared concern/suspicion or report, the point of contact must follow the following procedure:

1. Receive the report and ensure that it is recorded in writing in the incident log.
2. Assess the level of risk (see below for a list of criteria that can guide the assessment) and the child's best interests, in order to determine whether it would be beneficial to react. The results of this assessment should be recorded in the incident register.

⁸ https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIXjOQiva73CF9VmaxpAUA28Glv1DrRop26GS92Z7qh1JdzA/viewform?usp=sf_link.

⁹ <https://codeofgoodpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/KCS-Management-of-Child-Safeguarding-Allegations.pdf>

¹⁰ **Malice:** the term "malice" implies that an allegation, in whole or in part, has been made with the deliberate intention of misleading or harming the person who is the subject of the allegation. For an allegation to be qualified as malicious, evidence of malicious intent is required. Care must be taken when dealing with such allegations, as some facts may not be entirely untrue. Some parts of an allegation may have been fabricated or exaggerated, but others may be based on truth.

- If the risk is moderate, and the child's best interests do not dictate reporting to the outside world, then the most important thing is to ensure his safety, and provide him with every opportunity to get help. If it's in the child's best interests to do so, his legal guardians should be notified and the situation monitored.
 - If the child is in serious danger (suspected or real, immediate or imminent), the point of contact must turn to the external network (depending on the situation), i.e. the child protection sector or the authorities. Unless they themselves are the cause of the danger, the child's legal guardians must be informed.
3. Ensure that measures are taken regarding the perpetrators, if known (see next section).
 4. Follow up on the referral to ensure that the child receives the necessary help within a reasonable timeframe.

Here are a few (non-exhaustive) ideas for risk assessment:

- What are the child's primary needs (physical and mental health, immediate care) and are they being met?
- Is the damage suffered, suspected or potential? Is the damage present or future?
- After assessing the child's environment and life context - do these facilitate or, on the contrary, prevent the harm/aggravation of the harm?
- Is there a risk of revictimization?
- Is it a child with special needs? Special needs include children in precarious situations, migrant children, children with disabilities and/or illnesses, children in conflict with the law, children separated from their parents, LGBTQIA+ children...
- Is the injury slight, moderate or severe? If you're not sure, it's best to overestimate the damage, especially if the child has special needs.
- Is the child in the care of an organization or person who is supposed to protect him or her?
- Am I able to protect this child?

For perpetrators of violence

If the author is a staff member of DCI-Belgium

As indicated in all contracts and in DCI-Belgium's Internal Rules and Regulations (ROI), breaches by members of staff of the duties of their office, of the employment contract, of the ROI or of the provisions of the law of July 3, 1978 are sanctioned as follows, and not necessarily in a gradual manner: call to order (verbal or written), written warning, dismissal with notice (to be served or not) in return for compensation in lieu of notice, dismissal on serious grounds without notice and without compensation in lieu of notice.

Serious misconduct is considered to be any misconduct which renders the continuation of any professional collaboration between the employer and the employee during the performance of the contract definitively impossible. The employer may classify as serious misconduct any act that contravenes the present Child Safeguarding Policy.

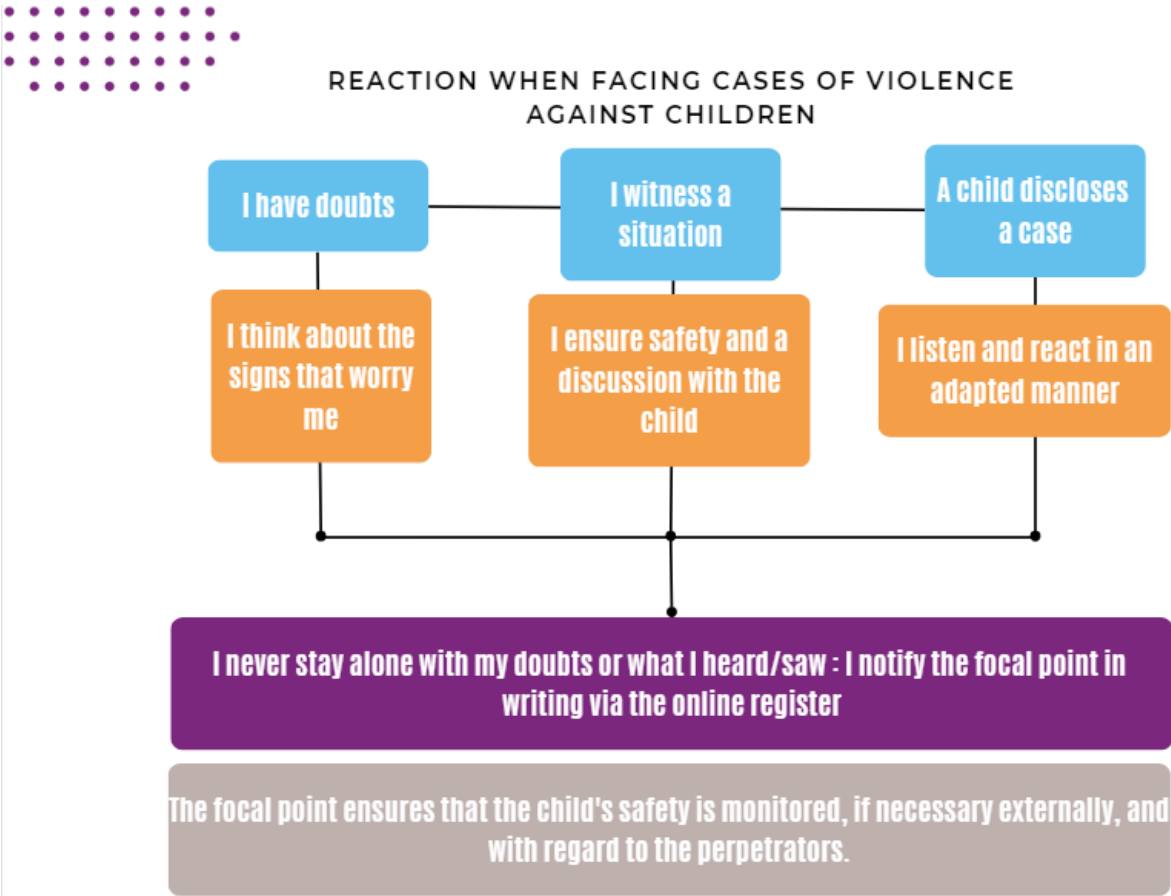
If the perpetrator is another adult

The facts committed must be reported to the contact point, which, depending on their seriousness, 1) will turn to the appropriate party for the application of a sanction (e.g. termination of partnership) 2) report the facts to the authorities for prosecution.

If the author is a minor

Facts committed must be reported to the contact point, which, depending on their seriousness, will 1) turn to the appropriate person for the application of a sanction 2) report the facts to the authorities for appropriate follow-up. Particular attention must be paid to the risks of violence that a minor perpetrator may experience.

In a nutshell



DATA COLLECTION, COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

DCI-Belgium's communications policy is based on the principle of the best interests of the child. For this reason, every act of collecting, distributing and using media or data concerning children must be subject to an assessment that takes this principle into consideration. All those to whom the DCI-Belgium CSP applies have a responsibility to ensure that the moral and physical integrity of the child is respected before, during and after¹¹ any act of data collection, dissemination and use. If this is a collective responsibility, the communications manager is the *ultimate* guarantor of this respect.

DCI-Belgium's communication policy aims to promote a realistic and useful representation¹² of children, and ensures that the image given is not sensationalist but constructive and respectful. All aspects of data, media and communication management are carried out in compliance with DCI-Belgium's implementation file for the General European Data Protection Regulation. This file is available on request.

As a general rule, personal information and media concerning children are not accessible to the public and are stored securely. This data is not, under any circumstances, shared with the public or unauthorized persons without the consent of the child and, where appropriate, his or her legal guardians. All persons to whom this CSP applies are bound by a duty of discretion¹³.

DCI-Belgium ensures that the use of videos, photographs and images of children is limited and controlled in its publications. Publications include material recorded or transmitted in paper, electronic or digital form. In particular, it is subject to the informed, written consent of the child and his/her legal guardians¹⁴ and has a maximum expiration date of three years after it was taken. This means that the signatory understands the circumstances in which the image will be used and/or broadcast, and all the possible consequences of its publication, distribution or circulation. **Whenever possible, DCI-Belgium favours the use and capture of media and data that do not allow the child to be recognized** (by this we mean non-nominative data or, in the case of the media, data that does not include the child's face). **In communications, priority is given to images taken directly by DCI, rather than images from databases for which it is not known if/how the children & young people have given their consent.** Taking into account their ages and abilities, children are always involved in the choices that concern them.

¹¹ For this specific point, if the possibility remains to manage what is broadcast (it could, for example, disappear on social networks).

¹² We use photos or representational media when useful to illustrate the message.

¹³ For more information on the duty of discretion: [Duty of discretion and professional secrecy: what's the difference? - C. Meersseman - Yapaka.be - YouTube](#).

¹⁴ If the child is a minor, the parent's or guardian's agreement is required by law (rare exceptions possible in the case of migrant children, for example, then to be seen on a case-by-case basis with the safeguarding focal point). The rule for DCI Belgium is as follows: if the child says yes and the parent says no, it's no; if the child says no and the parent says yes, it's also no. The child has to say yes and the parent has to say yes. **You need two positive responses to consider that you have full consent.** There are specific consent forms for children, young people and adults respectively.

Children's data and media are stored in secure files. This means that only those workers who need to have access in order to carry out their duties can consult them. With regard to dissemination, it is the responsibility of the person in charge of communication to ensure that the data and media disseminated comply with the rules set out in this Policy. Furthermore, such data is kept only for as long as is necessary for the service provided, including to meet all legal and fiscal obligations.

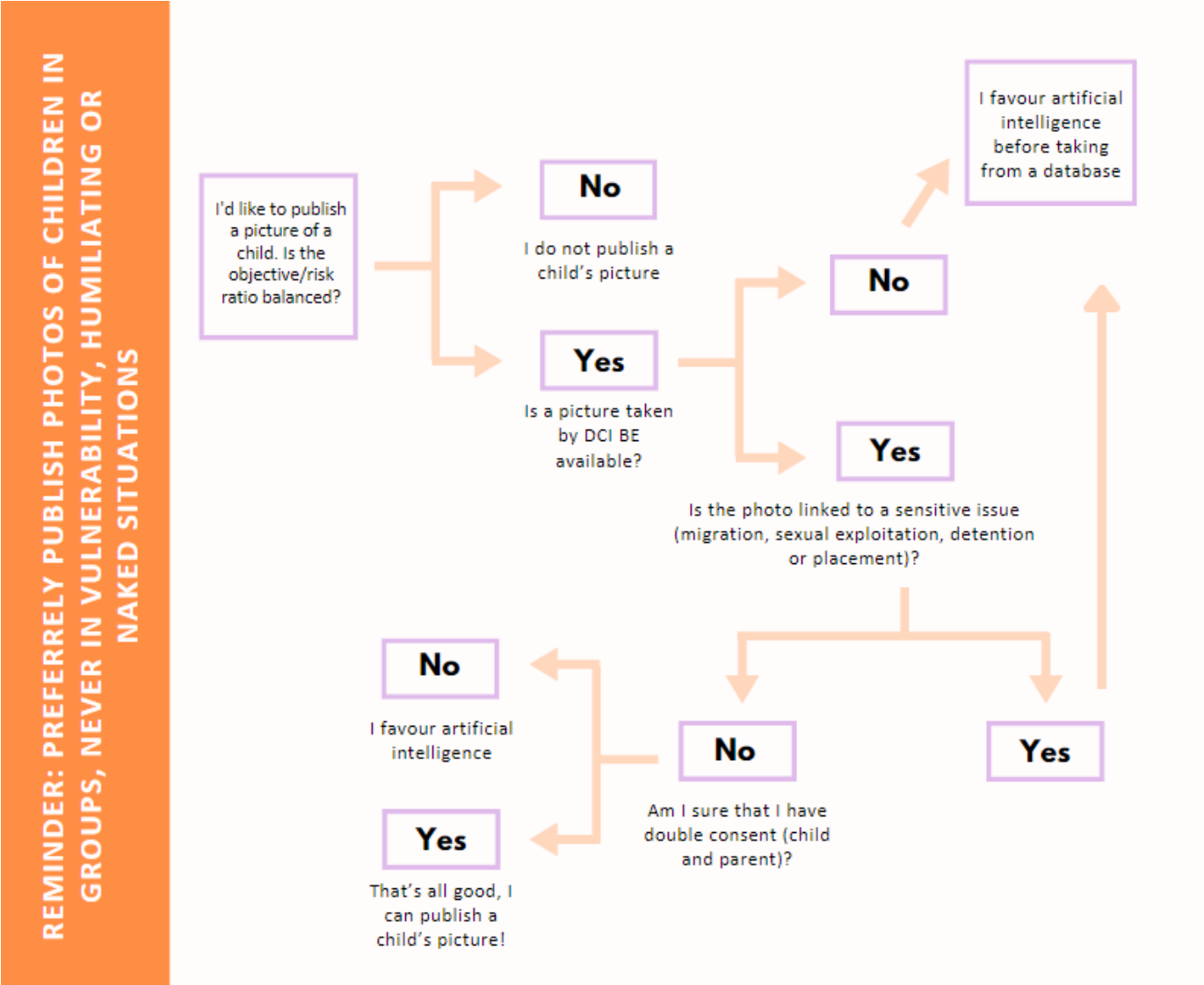
Regular review and reflection procedures, carried out by those responsible for safeguarding, ensure that this Policy, and in particular data management, is in line with changes in national and international legislation and technological developments.

For all requests relating to personal data, contact is preferred via the address communication@defensedesenfants.be or by telephone on +32 (0) 2 203 79 08. It is possible, at any time, to become aware of the data concerning you kept by DCI- Belgium and to request its correction or deletion, in compliance with the right to be forgotten established by the RGPD.

The 7 key principles of media use

- 1.** All media use (photo, video, audio) must comply with the CSP and its procedures.
- 2.** If images of the child's environment and community are to be broadcast, it is essential to ensure that the child's safety is not compromised (especially when carrying out a risk analysis).
- 3.** In the case of media on which the child is identifiable, it is compulsory to obtain the child's consent and that of the legal representative (no full-face photos where there is a risk to the child, particularly in migration), and to include an expiry date of no more than three years after taking the drug.
- 4.** It is essential to ensure that the child is not posed in an inappropriate manner (sexual connotations, child in danger, etc.). Similarly, it is forbidden to take or publish images of children in vulnerable situations. Images must always respect their dignity.
- 5.** The media should, as far as possible, present children in a "positive" way, i.e. highlighting their qualities, rather than sensationalizing them.
- 6.** Media recording is reserved for strictly professional use (e.g. media must not be broadcast or stored privately, on a mobile phone, shown to people outside the professional network, etc.).
- 7.** Media recorded during DCI-Belgium activities must be forwarded to the person responsible for communication, who will ensure that they comply with the principles set out here, before any publication.
- 8.** It is the responsibility of DCI-Belgium staff (and in the first instance the Communications Officer) to make the external media as aware as possible of the present Policy. All DCI-Belgium media must be used with the mention "© DCI Belgium/photographer - All rights reserved - Use subject to a request to DCI Belgium".

As for the use of children's photos, please refer to the following decision tree:



MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

Follow-up measures are designed to facilitate the application of Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures. Without effective support for these measures, the CPP risks not being taken seriously, not coming into effect, not being fully implemented, and not working well.

That's why it's everyone's responsibility, individually and collectively, to ensure that this policy is implemented in a dynamic and appropriate way over the long term.

Continuous assessment through the annual evaluation meeting

As mentioned above, the meeting takes place once a year, according to a fixed schedule, with the Director of DCI-Belgium (in accordance with Article 9 of the ROI). Its main purpose is to discuss the past year, the well-being of the employee, and to enable a mutual professional assessment. In the annual interview guide (see appendices), a number of questions are included to assess whether the worker's understanding of the Safeguarding Policy is still clear and complete; to inform of any changes or additions; and to carry out a new risk assessment if the worker's tasks have changed or are in the process of changing. **The interview also provides an opportunity to hand in the employee's criminal record on an annual basis.**

Evaluation by the team

At least three times a year, **the DCI-Belgium team carries out an evaluation of** implementation, based on the results of annual interviews, points for reflection raised during the year, questions linked to the incident register **and the opinions of beneficiary children** (discussions, observations, "opinion boxes", etc.). The report is drawn up by the focal points.

On the basis of this self-assessment, an annual action plan will be drawn up to address any shortcomings in the implementation of the Policy and to mitigate the risks identified.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1: commitment to CSP compliance

I have read the DCI-Belgium Child Safeguarding and Welfare Policy and understand that I am required to:

- Respect the entirety of this Policy, and in particular its Code of Conduct;
- Dealing with any incident that occurs or is discovered during DCI-Belgium activities in accordance with the established procedure;

I, the undersigned, hereby accept all the terms of the DCI-Belgium Child Safeguarding Policy and undertake to comply with it.

Date:

Signature (read and approved):

Appendix 2: declaration in case a criminal record cannot be provided

Exception - if unable to provide a criminal record extract, see recruitment section.

I declare that I have never been convicted of an offence involving any type of harm to a child, young person or vulnerable person, and that I have never been troubled or warned/sanctioned in this regard. I also declare that there are no civil or criminal proceedings of any kind against me at the date of this declaration in respect of any allegation of harm caused to a child.

Date:

Signature (read and approved):

Appendix 3: Standard end-of-training test

1. What is DCI-Belgium's reference text on children's rights?
2. Does this text differ from country to country?
3. Until what age is a child?
 - 16 years old
 - 18 years old
 - 21 years old
 - It depends on the country
4. In a few words: what is a Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP)?
5. Does DCI-Belgium have a written Child Safeguarding Policy?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
 - Other :
6. Does DCI-Belgium's Child Safeguarding Policy explicitly state that all children have the right to the same protection?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
 - Other :
7. Does DCI-Belgium's Child Safeguarding Policy apply to all persons with whom the ASBL comes into contact (workers, volunteers, children, partners, trainees, administrators, etc.)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
 - Other :
8. I must systematically assess the risks of :
 - My projects
 - My activities
 - My work with partners

9. Give some examples of situations that, if they occurred in the course of your work, would cause you concern:

10. Some forms of violence are linked to the cultural context (e.g. genital mutilation) and are therefore acceptable.

- True
- False

11. Spanking is educational, it helps to raise the child.

- True
- False

12. DCI-Belgium has a Code of Conduct.

- True
- False

13. All persons working for DCI-Belgium are required to provide a criminal record.

- True
If so, how often?
- False

14. Within DCI-Belgium, there are one or more reference persons for child safeguarding issues. Who are they?

15. Is there a procedure for dealing with incidents that occur or are reported during activities carried out by DCI-Belgium?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

16. In the event of violence occurring or being detected in the context of your activities for DCI-Belgium, would you feel sufficiently equipped to deal with it?

- Yes
- No
If you checked no, please indicate what would make you feel better equipped:

17. There are measures in place to ensure that your partners have child safeguarding standards similar to those of DCI-Belgium.

- True

False

18. Personal data concerning children are considered to be :

- Their name
- Their date of birth
- Their photo
- Contact details
- Their family situation

19. What's the difference between consent and informed consent?

20. We've just finished an activity with several children, who are due to be taken home by their parents. One of the parents calls me to say he'll be about 1 hour late. My colleague has to leave, but we're very close to my home, so I suggest that the child goes with me to wait for his parent. Am I doing the right thing?

- Yes
- No

21. As part of a project, I organized a big game with several children. They get caught up in the game and I film them in action. I'm not going to share the film all over the Internet, just on the DCI-Belgium website. May I?

- Yes
- No

22. One of my partners, during an activity, wants to take photos of the children to keep a record of the event. He tells me that his organization does not require the children's consent for this type of action. What should I do?

23. During an activity, a child confides in me that he is being bullied by another child in the reception centre where they are both staying. How do I react?

24. I learn that a colleague insulted a child during a DCI-Belgium activity. How should I react?

25. In response to the previous question, let's now imagine that the insults were uttered by both the child safeguarding contact and the director. Who should I contact?

26. If a child confides in me about a violent incident, I can promise not to tell anyone.

- True
- False

Appendix 4: annual evaluation meeting guide

Role and objectives of the annual evaluation meeting

This is a privileged moment for dialogue and exchange between the employee and his/her line managers. It is clearly distinct from day-to-day professional relations.

This interview provides an opportunity to take stock of professional activity, and to discuss achievements, objectives and professional management, as well as well-being at work. The interviewees can express and compare their analyses of past and future activities. Employees express their views on their duties, their contribution to the life of DCI-Belgium, their wishes for the future and their training needs. Management draws up an assessment of the past year, redefines or clarifies missions and sets objectives for the future.

This interview also has a role to play in child safeguarding, and should include a section designed to assess the employee's understanding of the CSP and its implementation over the past year. It is also an opportunity to request an up-to-date police record.

Ideas for CSP-oriented questions

1. How did you use the CSP this year?
2. Did you receive initial training when you arrived (the first year)/Did you need to refresh your initial training (the other years?) and, if so, on what points?
3. Do you know if DCI-Belgium's CSP has been revised in the last twelve months?
4. How familiar are you with the contact points? Have they been able to respond to your questions and/or concerns over the past year?
5. What were your main safeguarding problems this year, and how were they resolved?

Ideas for evaluation at the quarterly CSP meeting

A meeting is held every quarter, dealing specifically and solely with the CSP. Of course, if other meetings are necessary, they must be added.

1. Has DCI-Belgium's CSP been revised in the last twelve months?
2. Are contact points still active/trained?
3. Did each new employee receive initial training on the CSP?
4. Has every employee had an annual interview that includes safeguarding issues?
5. Have all employees provided an up-to-date police record?
6. What were the main difficulties encountered this year in terms of safeguarding, and how can they be resolved?
7. Were there more or fewer incident/concern reports than in previous years?
8. What was the follow-up to these reports (insufficient vs. sufficient, quality, shortcomings, etc.)?

9. How can prevention and risk assessment be improved to reduce incidents and concerns?
10. How much of the budget was devoted to child safeguarding?
11. Was there clear documentation/assessment of children's well-being during activities?
12. Are all data safeguarding measures effectively implemented?

Appendix 5: Guidelines for ethical research involving children

Global framework

Research involving children must, as the name suggests, genuinely involve them. This means that they should not just be the objects of research, but become its subjects, and be able to take an active part in it. This not only ensures respect for their right to expression and participation, but also the production of quality data. When a team of investigators embarks on research involving children, they must, whatever the form of the research, be familiar with the present ethical guide.

Precautionary principle

If, according to the researcher and/or objective elements of the child's environment, there is a risk that the research will cause even slight harm to the child, the precautionary principle applies. This means that the interview, data collection or any other stage of the research must not be undertaken if it could result in harm to the child, either in the short or long term. Before any research is carried out, it is therefore essential to use the risk analysis table and identify possible options for reducing these risks, where appropriate. Sometimes, risks can only be identified by the child him/herself. For this reason, informed consent must be obtained in order to rule out any remaining sources of potential harm.

Preparation

For the child, a research project may be an opportunity to express a question, a wish, a need... The team of investigators must be prepared to respond as best they can to the child's request, either by directing him or her to people who can help, or by providing answers themselves. In some cases, it may even be useful to prepare documents containing all the information needed in the event of a question or need, to be given to the child at the end of the research.

Informed consent

Informed consent is consent given when the child knows and understands what is being asked of him or her. Children must therefore be given information that is adapted to their age and specific needs, and that takes account of their life context. If necessary, information can be conveyed through interactive media (photographs, illustrations, videos, etc.). Understanding also means clearly explaining the potential risks and benefits of participating in research.

In some cases, it is possible to ask only the legal guardian to consent for a child. While this is sometimes necessary to include the child in the research (e.g. a child with a severe mental handicap), it should be avoided wherever possible. Giving the child the right to consent means recognizing him or her as a person in his or her own right, which is a clear necessity for research on children's rights. A child must therefore be in a position, as far as possible, to give his or her own free and informed consent to involvement in research. The consent given is not fixed. It can be withdrawn at any time during the research: the child must be able to withdraw without constraint if he or she so wishes.

A document containing information tailored to the child's needs should be prepared in advance, so that she can read it freely and without haste. It is useful to include :

- a clear statement of the subject and purpose of the research, and how the child's responses will be used;
- explicit mention of the child's right to freely refuse to take part in the research, as well as the possibility of renouncing participation at any time;
- a statement of potential risks and benefits;
- an explanation of the confidentiality (or otherwise) of the answers given. In this respect, it is essential to make it clear to the child, several times if necessary, that adults have a duty to protect him/her, and that the fact that information given is confidential may sometimes be subject to exceptions in the case of a worrying situation (e.g. abuse). If the child appears to be in danger, the researcher must clearly discuss the situation with the child, and carefully engage in dialogue before making any decisions;
- an indication of the duration and location of the interview, to ensure that it is suitable for the child. It is also essential to specify that the child can ask questions and seek clarification at any time.

Obtaining a child's signature can have both advantages and disadvantages. In particular, if the child shows signs of illiteracy or does not understand the language, asking for a signature may be inappropriate. Thus, provided the child is obviously capable, verbal consent may be sufficient to signify that the child has been adequately informed about the research project, and that his or her consent has been freely given. When it is not possible to obtain written consent from a child, it is important that a literate adult who understands the language can testify to the consent given.

Free consent

To ensure that consent is freely given, it is necessary to ensure that the place where data collection takes place is calm and appropriate. It is preferable, if possible, to let the child choose the location herself. Similarly, the researcher should always take care to ensure that consent is not given in a setting that promises (explicitly or implicitly) something to the child that cannot ultimately be guaranteed.

Privacy

Protecting the confidentiality of research participants' answers and data is essential to guaranteeing their safety and the quality of the information provided. It is preferable, if possible, to collect the child's personal data (name, place and date of birth, nationality...) independently of his or her answers or interview notes, and if possible to encode/disguise them (use of pseudonyms, encrypted codes...). In all cases, data must be stored in secure locations/networks. It is important to inform children of the precautions taken to protect their identity. In this sense, research content, if personal or nominative, can only be discussed with people who have made a similar commitment to confidentiality.

Follow-up

Wherever possible, it's important to try and give the child feedback on the results of the research. This reaffirms the value of the child's participation, and gives him or her a concrete idea of how useful he or she has been in the overall research process.

For more information: Graham, A., Powell, M., Taylor, N., Anderson, D. and Fitzgerald, R. (2013) Ethical research involving children, Florence, UNICEF Research Centre - Innocenti, link: https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ERIC-compendium-FR_LR.pdf
Lundy, L., & McEvoy, L. (2012). Childhood, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Research: What Constitutes a 'Rights-Based' Approach? In M. Freeman (Ed.), Law and Childhood Studies: Current Legal Issues Volume 14 (pp. 75-91). Oxford University Press

Check list

Prior to my research, I checked that it would not cause any harm to the children involved.

In advance of my research, I prepared tools to respond to the questions, wishes or needs of the children involved.

I've clearly explained to the child the subject of the research, its purpose, and how his or her contribution will or may be used.

I provide consent forms adapted to the child's age, abilities and living situation. These forms mention each of the steps indicated in the ethical research guide.

I plan to adapt the consent method to the child's abilities (literacy, language, age...).

I have been honest about the meaning of my research and have not generated unfounded expectations in the child (money, assistance, other retribution, etc.).

To conduct my research, I chose an appropriate, quiet place where the child could feel at ease. I let him choose the place/another place that would suit him better.

I gave the child the opportunity to tell me his/her preference as to how the interview would be conducted (in a room with other children, with a researcher...).

I took the time to create a relaxed environment, to get to know the child and to establish a degree of mutual trust before our interview began.

I've set aside enough time so that each child participating in the research can do so at his or her own pace, and have enough latitude to talk to me in the way that suits him or her best.

I am able to conduct my research in an empathetic way, without judgments, discriminations or stereotypes.

The questions in my research do not direct the child's response (questions too closed, with no possibility of giving a different opinion). I also leave room for the child to suggest certain things in relation to my research.

I am attentive to the child's behavior (verbal, non-verbal) and am available to suggest that the child change the subject, take a break, stop, or reassure him/her.

I'm attentive to each child's particular sensitivities and life context when conducting my research.

I value the child's participation and thank him/her for it. At the end of each interview, I leave time for a brief reminder of the role of the information given, and for final questions/comments.

I have established clear rules regarding the confidentiality of the data resulting from my research, and respect them fully.

Appendix 6: consent form for children

The following two examples are taken from forms signed during an advocacy activity. The forms must be adapted to the activity in question.

Example of an activity participation form

Date:

Young person's full name:

Thank you for reading this short text:

Hello,

Over the coming weekend, we'll be running a series of activities, workshops and games to get your views on the rights of migrant children in Belgium. These questions will be put to you as part of the process of creating a memorandum (a document with recommendations) for the political elections to be held in 2024. In other words, we're gathering your views to ensure that the voice of young people in migration is heard, and that their rights are better taken into account by the politicians who will be elected in 2024. All the questions we're going to ask and the games we're going to play are not a test or exam, there are no right or wrong answers. As you can see, you're not the only one we'll be asking questions to, as these activities are aimed at a number of young people who have experienced migration to Belgium.

By participating in these activities, you agree that what you say may be used in the context of advocacy activities (i.e. work with politicians) and communication activities (posts on social networks, videos, etc.) of Plan International Belgium and Defence for Children International Belgium. We could also use what you've said in other contexts, if we think it's appropriate. It will always be within the framework of our organizations' activities.

You're free to agree or not to participate, you don't have to. If you don't want to participate, it won't make any difference, and no one will be angry or disappointed. And if you do feel like it, and say yes now, but change your mind later, you're allowed to do it, and we don't mind.

If you have any questions, requests or things you don't understand, at any time while we're talking you can interrupt us and ask for explanations. If there are questions you don't like or don't want to answer, you can tell us. You have the right not to answer every question.

Tick the following boxes if you think they are true for you:

I understand:

- What type of activity will I take part in?
- I'll be asked several questions and asked to give my opinion
- I have the right to refuse to participate without negative consequences
- That I can change my mind even after I've said yes
- I can ask questions at any time during the discussion
- That there are no right or wrong answers
- That I have the right not to answer every question
- That anything I say may be used in advocacy, communications, and any other relevant activities of Plan International Belgium and Defence for Children International Belgium.
- I agree to participate in these activities

Signature:

Declaration by a person responsible for the proper conduct of activities:

I made sure that the participant understood what I was asking and how the data would be collected. I confirm that the young person was given the opportunity to ask questions and that all the questions asked were answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the person was not coerced into giving consent and that consent was given freely and voluntarily.

Name of person responsible:

Signature:

Sample media consent form

PHOTO/VIDEO/AUDIO RECORDING AGREEMENT

Who we are

Founded in 1991, Defence for Children International Belgium (DCI) is the Belgian section of the organization

Defence for Children International. Our aim is the **effective respect of all children's fundamental rights**.

To be completed by DCI colleague

Description *Brief description to easily identify the photos (context)* These photos were taken during a three-day consultation activity organized in collaboration with Plan International Belgium. The aim was to gather the opinions of young people with a migration background on the rights of children in migration as part of the advocacy linked to the 2024 political elections.

Date & place

July 28-30, 2023, Louvain-la-Neuve.

Form to fill in

First & last name: _____

Living in Place of residence : _____

I agree to be photographed-e/filmed/recorded by

Name of photographer/videographer + DCI project manager: Emmanuelle Vacher

I authorize DCI Belgium to use the photos/videos/audio recordings on which I am represented, without time limit (check the box(es) with which you agree).

- In all its publications (website, social networks, newsletter, publications...)
- ... and those of its partners
- and in the media
- Agree with EVERYTHING**
- Agreed BUT with the following restrictions of use** (false first name, without showing face, not on the internet.) :
- _____
- I do NOT authorize DCI-Belgium to use the photos / videos / recordings on which I am represented.**

General Data Protection Regulation

By signing this form, I give the above authorizations to DCI Belgium, until the year 2033. I have the

right to contact DCI to find out how my photos are used, and to change any of my rights. DEI undertakes to use photos in a respectful manner. For further information, please visit our website: <https://www.dei-belgique.be/index.php/a-propos/politique-de-protection-des-donnees.html>

[Date, signature and "Read and approved"].

Date:/...../.....;

Appendix 7: standard form legal guardians

The following is the general structure of a consent form for a child's legal guardians:

Date:

Full name of parent/legal guardian:

First and last name of child/pseudonym:

Surname and first name of the person conducting the activity (if applicable):

Introduction: [Project framework]

Purpose: [Purpose of the activity for which consent is requested].

Selection of participants: [Why we are specifically proposing that your child take part in this activity].

Voluntary participation: [Free aspect of consent and participation].

Procedure: [Concrete activity sequence] Duration:

[Duration of activity]

Risks [Possible risks and proposed solutions].

I give my free and voluntary consent for my child to participate in the above activity. Signature

(preceded by the words read and approved)

Under no circumstances can a child consent to any form or degree of violence.

Appendix 8: Contents of reporting form (incident register)

The reporting form is online. It can be accessed via this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIXjOQiva73CF9VmaxpAUA28Giv1DrRop26GS92Z7qh1JdzA/viewform?usp=sf_link

It contains the following points:

About you

First and last name:

Function:

Your relationship with the child:

Your contact details:

About the child/children

First name(s) and surname(s):

Gender identity(ies):

Age(s):

First name(s), last name(s) and contact details of parents:

Your concern

What is your concern? Alternatively, what is the incident?

Is it a concern? Have you received a report? Were you a witness? Date of alleged incident:

Location of alleged incident:

Identity of alleged perpetrator:

Function/relationship with the child:

Note if there were any references to a digital or online component that might be important for a later investigation:

Your personal observations (visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.) [N.B. Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay].

What exactly did the child or other source say to you [about the incident] and how did you react? (Specify when you are reporting what the child or other source actually said, or if it is your interpretation).

Measure(s) taken:

Where is the child and who is responsible for him/her (if possible, provide contact details)? Were other children or people involved in the alleged incident?

Who else knows about this?

What would the child like to happen next? Any other information not covered above:

Appendix 9: Child-friendly CSP



Rights say what is compulsory, what is allowed or what is forbidden. Every country has rules to protect children's rights. These are the **RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**.

Defence for Children International (DCI) is a **WORLDWIDE** organisation. We work to protect the rights of every child.



As a child (aged 0 to 18), you have **THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED**. This means that no one can hurt you. It's not allowed. If someone hurts you, you have to talk about it.

And for that, we have **5 GOLDEN RULES**



These are rules that we and you must always respect.

1

You have the right to **FEEL GOOD** during activities. If you don't feel well, the best thing to do is to talk about it so that an adult can find a solution.

2

You must be treated like any other child. **YOU ALL HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS.** For example, like everyone else, you have the right to express yourself and to play.

3

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY STOP when you don't like something or don't want to do it. The adults who work for DCI must respect you and listen to what you say.

4

NO ONE SHOULD HURT YOU. For example, no child or adult has the right to shout at you, hit you, insult you, make fun of you, touch you or take photos of you without your permission...

5

If someone is hurting you or someone else, the best thing to do is to tell a DCI adult. **IT'S DCI'S JOB TO LISTEN TO YOU AND HELP YOU.** We'd rather you didn't keep it a secret. If you can't talk to someone from DCI, don't hesitate to talk to another adult, for example your parents, at school...

Appendix 10: Toolbox - online resources and information

Find out more about violence against children

1. Child safety standards: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/accountability/> (available in AR, EN, ES, FR, PT)
2. WHO European Report 2013 on Preventing Child Maltreatment http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/217018/European-Report-on-Preventing-Child-Maltreatment.pdf - The geographical scope is 53 countries: countries in the WHO European Region: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries>.
3. September 2014 UNICEF report - "Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children" - prevalence of different forms of violence against children data from 190 countries. http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_74865.html.
4. 2014 FRA Gender-based violence against women <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>
5. Council of Europe campaign "One in five" https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/default_en.asp
6. General Comment No. 13 (2011) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the right of the child to be free from all forms of violence http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.13_en.pdf
7. World Report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006):
8. The Global Study on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006): <https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=4ffd39b72>
9. <http://guides.womenwin.org/gbv/readiness-and-response/response-referral-and-reporting/disclosure-dos-and-donts> Do's and don'ts are also available in other languages: [FR](#) - [ES](#) - [PT](#)
10. NSPCC (UK) Guidance on disclosures by children of abuse: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/>
11. A 14-minute TEDx Talk by an adult survivor of child sexual abuse on responding to disclosure Healing from sexual abuse can begin with a word (Rena Romano | TEDxOcala) https://www.ted.com/talks/rena_romano_healing_from_sexual_abuse_can_start_with_one_word?utm_source
12. TUSLA (Irish Child Protection Agency): advice on disclosing information <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/general-public/how-should-i-deal-with-a-disclosure-of-abuse-from-a-child/>
13. 15-minute e-learning course on disclosure response (Guiding principles: Listen-Believe-Act; practical tips for dealing with disclosure) <https://campus.nsvrc.org/course/view.php?id=45> (full version: <https://campus.nsvrc.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=301>)
14. Guide to potential indicators of abuse: <https://www.childmatters.org.nz/insights/abuse-indicators/>

E-learning resources on safeguarding and child safeguarding

- 15.** *National Sexual Violence Resource Centre, excerpt from <http://www.nsvrc.org/elearning/21385> online learning portal.*
- 16.** Tusla (Irish child protection agency): online training on child protection (1.5 hours in English, useful also outside Ireland for general concepts and understanding, including when to approach the authorities (noting that national legislation must be taken into account).
<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme/>
- 17.** European Barnahus webinars with a wide range of experts
<https://www.childrenatrisk.eu/promise/webinars/>

GLOSSARY

Child: any human being under the age of 18, in accordance with article 1^{er} of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Adolescent: does not correspond to a given age bracket, but rather to a phase of human development that extends from puberty to adulthood.

International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): international treaty adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1989, with the aim of recognizing and protecting the specific rights of children.

Child Safeguarding Policy: a structural reference tool for creating a healthy, positive environment for children and demonstrating that the organization takes its duties and responsibilities towards the children entrusted to its care seriously. It provides a framework of principles, standards and guidelines that serve as a basic reference for the organization and individuals in areas related to its activities.

Best interests of the child: refers to the child's well-being, holistically and as far as possible, or at least to what will be least harmful to him or her. When making a decision about a child, the child's best interests must always be the guiding principle.

Participation: children must be able to give their opinion and take part in decisions affecting them (directly or indirectly) at all levels of society, including their own protection. To achieve this, the information they receive must be adapted to their age and abilities. Participation must be transparent, inclusive and genuine. The safeguarding of children must be guaranteed to enable them to participate in the sense of the Convention.

Safeguarding: the responsibility of organizations to ensure that their staff, operations and programs do not harm children, i.e. that they do not expose children to the risk of maltreatment and abuse, and that any concerns the organization may have about the safety of children in the structures in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities.

Violence: all acts or lack of acts causing harm.

Physical violence: Any act that violates a person's physical integrity to the point of endangering his or her life. E.g.: beating, biting, burning, choking, strangling, hitting, pushing, shaking, murdering.

Psychological violence: Persistent attack on sense of self-worth. Ex: rejection, terror, isolation, denigration, indifference...

Verbal violence: Humiliating, insulting, hurtful language. E.g.: demeaning comments, insults, name-calling, threats, mockery, sarcasm, constant prohibitions...

Sexual violence: Acts of a sexual nature, with or without physical contact, committed by an individual without the consent of the person concerned and/or through emotional manipulation or blackmail. Ex: rape, touching, incest, sexual harassment...

Neglect: Treatment of a child that does not meet the essential conditions for his or her emotional, psychological and physical development.

Direct contact: being in the physical presence of one or more children as part of the organization's activities, whether this contact is occasional or regular, short or long term.

Indirect contact: to be taken in a broad sense. This term covers all situations of contact with a child that do not involve direct contact. Even indirect contact can have an impact on children, and therefore entails responsibility.

Worker or member of staff: any person providing work for remuneration and under a subordinate relationship for the benefit of an organization, whatever the duration and nature of the employment contract.

Consultant: a person who provides consulting services, usually on an independent basis. He or she has expertise in a specific field, and acts at the ASBL's request within a contractual and remunerated framework.

Volunteer: as defined by the law of July 3, 2005, a volunteer is a person who carries out an activity without remuneration or obligation (but under contract); organized by an organization outside the family or private sphere; for the benefit of a non-profit organization or the community.

Trainee: a person learning a professional skill, usually still in their studies, as part of a contractual activity.

Partnership: association between two or more companies or entities that decide to cooperate in order to achieve a common goal. The relationship between the partners is formalized by a contract or collaboration protocol in which the responsibilities, roles and financial contributions of each party are clearly defined.

Informed consent: Informed consent is consent given when the child knows and understands what is being asked of him/her and/or the situation. The child must therefore receive information adapted to his or her age and specific characteristics, and which takes account of the context in which he or she lives. Comprehension also implies that the potential risks and benefits of our actions are clearly understood.

Child victim: the term "victim" should be used in an objective sense to indicate that the child has suffered as a result of a harmful act. The term should always be used with the child's needs, rights and resilience in mind.

Risk: probability of an outcome.

Reporting: to make something known; to bring to the attention of a person or entity.

RGPD: General Data Protection Regulation, European Union regulation that constitutes the referencetext in terms of personal data protection.

ROI: Règlement d'Ordre Intérieur, or work regulations, governing working conditions.

Ordinary educational violence: "All forms of violence in their more or less severe expressions can be considered as belonging to educational violence when their purpose is to punish and educate children. This includes verbal, psychological and emotional abuse, forms of neglect and deprivation, as well as corporal punishment." - Délégué Général aux droits de l'enfant (2019)

Word choice

To guarantee the rights of all, DCI-Belgium prefers that certain words be used:

- **Children in migration** rather than migrant children
- **Ordinary educational violence** rather than educational violence
- **Sexual exploitation of children in prostitution** rather than child prostitution
- **Child sexual abuse material** rather than child pornography
- **Sexual exploitation in travel and tourism** rather than sex tourism
- **Children in contact with the law** rather than juvenile delinquents
- **Reception crisis** rather than migration crisis

