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# Introduction

Human Dignity Foundation (HDF) is committed to ensuring that the programmes it funds are respectful of, and accountable to, all programme participants. Our values of passion, accountability, courage and excellence underpin this commitment.

HDF recognises that children are particularly vulnerable and must therefore be actively protected; this policy sets out our approach to child safeguarding.

Our Child Safeguarding Policy has been developed as an important part of HDF's on-going risk management. It is based on a review of relevant international and national protection policies and related documents including:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Ireland
- Keeping Children Safe: Child Safeguarding Standards and How to Implement Them

In addition, the protection policies of several donors, international and national non-governmental organisations have been reviewed (see Annex 6).

The HDF Child Safeguarding Policy regards any person under the age of 18 years to be a child or a minor.

# HDF Commitment to Child Safeguarding

The Board of Management of Human Dignity Foundation (HDF) is fully committed to the safeguarding of children. It recognises that considerations on the safeguarding of children permeate all aspects of HDF's work and should be reflected in all of HDF's policies, practices and activities.

HDF's Board is ultimately accountable for ensuring that children are safeguarded across the span of HDF's work and for implementation of the HDF Child Safeguarding Policy throughout the organisation.

The Board carries out a review of the foundation's Child Safeguarding Policy every three years.

HDF's Board expects all grantees and grantee partners to have in place a child safeguarding policy and, in the absence of such, to either develop their own policy or to adopt and fully comply with HDF's policy. HDF's Board also expects that all board members, employees, volunteers and consultants agree to fully comply with HDF's policy unless otherwise agreed in writing.

# Child Safeguarding Minimum Standards

The Board has agreed, and is committed to, the Minimum Standards outlined below. Regardless of which policy is being adhered to, these standards apply to all organisations implementing activities with HDF funds, including HDF itself.

## Organisation

- The organisation has a clear commitment to child safeguarding, and it makes this explicit in designing and reviewing its policies, procedures and publications through a safeguarding lens.
- The organisation has a safeguarding policy; the scope of which covers staff, volunteers including board members, consultants, grantees and sub-grantees. The policy is aligned with the legal framework of the country of operation (and operates to a higher standard where statutory provision fails to protect children or places them at risk of harm).
- The organisation has a clear plan for implementation of child safeguarding measures, including integration into all activities and processes, and regularly monitors and reviews progress against this plan.
- The organisation recognises the primacy of the voice of the child in all suspected or proven incidences of child abuse. As far as possible, it ensures that children are informed about their protection rights and involved in their own protection.
- The organisation's confidential reporting and complaints procedures are clearly documented, easily accessible and made known to all relevant stakeholders, including children.
- The organisation ensures that all cases of suspected child abuse are reported to its Board of Management and dealt with in accordance with its policy and procedures.

## Staff and Others

- The organisation has safe recruitment practices; including appropriate recruitment screening (e.g. criminal records checks

or equivalent where these are available), verbal referee checks, self-disclosure forms and behavioural questions at interview.

- All staff and others covered by the policy are made aware of, and are familiar with, the safeguarding policy and receive induction, training and/or briefing as required.
- The organisation has a clearly articulated code of conduct that must be adhered to and where appropriate signed by all staff, volunteers, board members, and consultants.
- Employment contracts and disciplinary procedures contain provisions for dealing with anyone who breaches the safeguarding code of conduct.
- The organisation designates staff as Safeguarding Officer/s (or equivalent) with clearly defined roles and responsibilities including: receiving reports of any child safeguarding issues, allegations or concerns; supporting implementation of the

policy; and keeping informed of best practice developments in child safeguarding.

## Monitoring

- Monitoring the effectiveness of child safeguarding measures is built into existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms both at organisational and project levels.
- The organisation's policy and associated procedures and practice are reviewed every 2-3 years or at times of changes in law, policy or organisational arrangements.
- The Board of HDF encourages its grantees working with children to share with HDF case studies which are based on best practice and international standards of child safeguarding so as to improve knowledge and learning in this area.
- The organisation assesses and actively manages the risks of all child-related activities, and evidence of such risk management activity is available.

# Goals and Objectives

The Board of Management of Human Dignity Foundation (HDF) is fully committed to the safeguarding of children. It recognises that considerations on the safeguarding of children permeate all aspects of HDF's work and should be reflected in all of HDF's policies, practices and activities. HDF recognises the rights of children to be protected from any harm or abuse. HDF is committed to taking all the necessary steps to ensure that children are protected and receive the support they need; recognising that some children face particular risks related to their gender, race, disability, etc.

The goal of HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the protection of children from physical abuse, sexual

abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any other form of abuse (see Annex 1 for definitions of abuse) in the process of HDF's work.

The objectives of the policy are to ensure that:

- Children who come into contact with HDF are protected from any form of abuse;
- HDF's grantees and their partners are committed to protection of children and that their policies and behaviour reflect this commitment;
- HDF's staff and board members are fully cognisant of child protection issues.

# Relevant Parties

HDF staff

HDF volunteers

HDF consultants

HDF grantees and partners

HDF Board of Directors

# Guiding Principles and Golden Rules

## Guiding Principles

- Every child has a right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.
- We believe that children are best protected in the context of a loving family and a vigilant community, and through the inclusion of children's voices in programming with partners supported by HDF's grant-making.
- HDF does not accept any form of abuse or exploitation of children as defined in Annex 1.
- HDF is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children who come in contact with HDF and its grantees.
- HDF will not fund, or engage in any type of collaboration with, organisations whose practices, or lack of them, endanger the wellbeing of children.

## Golden Rules

- **Never abuse or exploit** children or act in a way that places them at risk.
- **Report** any abuse or protection concerns to relevant authorities in accordance with relevant national legislation.
- **Cooperate** fully and confidentially in any investigation of concerns or allegations.

# Dissemination of the Policy

HDF is committed to ensuring that all relevant parties are informed about its policy and understand the importance of safeguarding children.

HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy is:

- Displayed on HDF's website and a signed hard copy stored in its registered offices;
- Shared and discussed with all current and future HDF employees, volunteers and consultants;
- Shared and discussed with all HDF existing and potential grantees;
- Shared and discussed with all current and future board members.



# Preventive Procedures

## Recruitment and Selection

HDF takes particular care in its recruitment and selection practices to ensure that all staff and voluntary members are committed to HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy.

All potential staff and consultants sign the following before commencing employment/contracted work:

1. Declaration of understanding and commitment to HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy (part of standard HR contract)
2. Code of Conduct (Annex 2)
3. HDF's Self-Disclosure Form (Annex 3)

## Grant-Making

HDF recognises the importance of the safeguarding and protection of children in its grant-making vis-a-vis grantees and programmes.

As part of its due diligence process, HDF determines an applicant's formal or informal policies and procedures in place which safeguard children (including any work undertaken by the applicant in partnership with other organisations). HDF reviews and responds to the information provided by applicants in the HDF Child Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool (Annex 4) submitted by potential grantees. Ensuring the implementation of grantees', and their partner organisations', policies and procedures is part of HDF's grant monitoring process. By signing an HDF Grant

Agreement, a grantee confirms its understanding and commitment to HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy and its contractual obligation to ensure that it and any partner organisations is works with meet HDF's Child Safeguarding Minimum Standards. HDF recognises that poor programming and implementation can cause harm to children and that children may be put at risk as a result of unintended consequences of a programme. Therefore, HDF gives attention to ensuring child protection and wellbeing in its project management cycle; all projects are assessed, monitored and evaluated with a child protection lens. HDF believes that the most effective means of ensuring appropriate protection of children is their involvement in project planning, implementation and monitoring. To this end, HDF promotes and supports the inclusion of children's voices in all of its funded projects.

# Reporting and Investigative Procedures

## Designated Protection Officer

HDF's Programme Officer acts as the Designated Protection Officer (DPO). Her/his role is to:

- Act as a focal point to receive, record and assess relevant information in relation to child protection - consult with others including local protection agencies and local authorities etc.;
- Ensure that protection risks across all HDF's grants are assessed by all Programme Officers;
- Ensure that HDF's policies and procedures are effective and in line with recommended best practice.

## Reporting

- Concerns in relation to a witnessed, suspected, reported or potential abuse by HDF or grantee staff/consultants must be reported to the following individuals as soon as possible but within 24 hours of the incident occurring:
  1. HDF - DPO or the Executive Director.
  2. Grantee organisation - Child Protection Officer or most appropriate senior member of staff.
- If for any reason it is not possible or appropriate to inform any of these people (due to them

being unavailable or in some way implicated in the alleged abuse) another senior manager or appropriate person (e.g. Chairperson of the Board) should be contacted.

- Safety of the child should always be the priority. If urgent action is required to protect the child then this should be given priority over the reporting procedure. REMEMBER: CHILDREN FIRST.
- All information relating to concerns should be recorded by the DPO using the Pro Forma in Annex 5; the report should include, as far as possible, facts only - any opinions expressed must be clearly identified as such. In the case of a direct disclosure of alleged child abuse, the language used by the person disclosing should be recorded as closely as possible.

## Investigation Procedures

- When there is a suspicion/disclosure of abuse allegedly committed by a HDF staff member/consultant/board member, HDF will consider immediate referral to the statutory authorities<sup>1</sup> where it appears an incident of child abuse may have been committed. Where the nature or details of the concern are unclear, HDF will conduct an internal investigation and, should information about an incident of abuse emerge, will report the abuse to the relevant authorities.

A written record of actions will be made.

- Concerns or allegations of possible breaches of the policy that are not deemed to be a serious incident of abuse will be dealt with initially by HDF via an internal investigation. A subsequent disciplinary process may be initiated if deemed appropriate.
- In the event of an allegation of abuse by a HDF staff member, an investigative committee will be formed which will consist of the Executive Director (or in the event of an allegation of abuse by the Executive Director, another staff member appointed by the Chair of the Board), at least one Board Member and an external expert. This committee's role is to fully and objectively investigate the case. A written report, including recommendations, will be submitted to HDF's Board.
- When there is suspicion/disclosure of abuse committed by staff/a consultant/board member of HDF's grantee(s), the grantee(s) will address it in accordance with its own protection policy and national laws; the grantee will fully inform HDF of the outcome of this process.
- In the event of an allegation of abuse involving a grantee of HDF, it is expected that the grantee will clearly document details of the case and the actions taken, keep this information safe and confidential, and fully inform HDF of the outcome of the process in a timely manner. All grantee interim reports to HDF should state if the organisation has received reports of and/or addressed any child protection concerns during reporting period.

## Decision-making

- The outcomes and recommendations of any HDF internal investigation will be reported by the investigation committee to the HDF Board which, in turn, will be responsible for deciding on further action.
- All allegations will be handled equitably and transparently (with due regard to confidentiality) irrespective of whom they are made against, and taking into account the rights of the parties involved.
- HDF will respond to all allegations of abuse and will, if requested, support grantees to do the same in accordance with national protection laws.

## Implications of Non-Compliance

- Should any staff member/consultant/board member of HDF be suspected of abuse s/he will be suspended from relevant duties pending the outcome of an internal investigation by the organisation, and if relevant, the outcome of an investigation by the statutory authorities.
- Should allegations of abuse or other breaches of the child protection policy against a staff member/consultant/board member be upheld s/he may be subject to disciplinary action and/or censure by HDF up to and including dismissal/termination of contract.
- In accordance with Clause 9.1 of HDF's Grant Agreement, HDF will discontinue all engagement with a grantee that does not deal with safeguarding and protection issues appropriately and efficiently.

<sup>1</sup>The relevant statutory authorities for HDF are 1) Tuisa Child and Family Agency, Dublin South East/Wicklow, PO Box 12639, Dublin 8, Tel +353-1-415-0533 and 2) An Garda Síochána, Kilmacud Road Upper, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Tel +353 1 666 5600.

# Media, Communications and ICT

- All HDF communications comply with the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages<sup>2</sup> and all staff/board members/consultants are made aware of this code.
- Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded as a child safeguarding concern.
- HDF will take care in not revealing identifying details of children that may feature in its publications or in other materials.
- All images and stories featuring children will be obtained with their informed consent or that of their parents/carers.
- The issue of confidentiality is secondary to the need for the safeguarding of children. Information in relation to safeguarding concerns will be shared with the relevant authority when deemed necessary.
- Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to access online child sexual exploitation and abuse material is illegal and should be reported in accordance with national laws.
- Pictures, materials and personal information regarding children will be held in a secure place, whether physical or online.

<sup>2</sup> Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non- Governmental Development Organisations. The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages can be found at <https://dochas.ie/images-and-messages>.



# Annexes

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# Annex 1: Definitions of Abuse<sup>3</sup>

**Abuse or neglect** of a child is caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer purposely failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, basic emotional needs.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the emotional development of a child. It may involve conveying to a child/young person that they are worthless, inadequate, or valued

only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving a child in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Commercial or other exploitation** of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.

# Annex 2: Code of Conduct

As a member of HDF staff/HDF contractor (delete as appropriate), I agree to:

- Be respectful of children's rights, background, culture and beliefs.
- Conduct myself in a manner consistent with my role as a representative of Human Dignity Foundation.
- Follow organisational policy and guidelines concerning the safety of children as outlined in HDF's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Not hit, physically harm or mistreat anyone.
- Refrain from any sexual act or behaviour towards children or young people, including using sexually suggestive language.
- Make every attempt not to spend unnecessary or excessive amounts of time alone with a child or children.
- Refrain from inappropriate physical contact with children.
- Refrain from developing relationships with a child or children that could be deemed exploitative or abusive in any way.
- Respect the confidentiality of a child's personal information so that her/his dignity and safety is not compromised.
- Refrain from photographing children without permission.
- Refrain from using photographs for communication or other purposes unless they comply with the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.
- Never let allegations by a child go unnoticed, unreported or unrecorded.
- Report any possible or actual breaches of this Code of Conduct by HDF staff, representatives or associates to the Executive Director (or Chairman) as soon as I become aware of the situation.

Name:

Witness:

Signature:

Date:

<sup>3</sup> Definitions of abuse are adapted from NSPCC.

# Annex 3: Self-Disclosure Form

Name:
Address:
<p>Have you ever been convicted of any offence overseas or in your home country?</p> <p>YES / NO</p> <p>If the answer is 'Yes' please give details:</p>
<p>Have you ever been dismissed from employment or had any disciplinary action taken against you that may be related to work with a child/children under 18 years of age?</p> <p>YES / NO</p> <p>If the answer to this question is 'Yes', please give details below:</p>
Signature:
Date:

# Annex 4: Grantees' Self-Assessment Tool<sup>4</sup>

## Part I: Self-Audit Tool

Keeping Children Safe (KCS) has developed a self-audit tool for organisations engaging and working with children in order to assess and monitor their child safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices.

The KCS self-audit tool examines four critical domains for assessing and reviewing an organisation's child safeguarding performance, namely: Policy, People, Procedures, and Accountability. There are six statements/standards within each domain. Read each statement and decide whether each standard is: (A) Met; (B) Partly met; or (C) Not Met. Tick the A, B, or C box as appropriate.

### Standard 1: Policy

		A	B	C
1	The organisation has a written child safeguarding policy, approved by the relevant management body, to which all staff and associates (including partners) are required to adhere.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Conventions and Guidelines pertaining to children informs the policy of the organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The policy is written in a way that is clear and easily understandable and is publicised, promoted and distributed widely to all relevant stakeholders, including children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The policy is clear that all children have equal rights to protection and that some children face particular risks and difficulties in getting help because of their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	The policy addresses safeguarding children from harm through misconduct by staff, associates and others, from poor practice, and from its operational activities where these may harm children or put them at risk due to poor design and/or delivery, for example.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>4</sup> In February 2016, Keeping Children Safe granted permission for Human Dignity Foundation to include its Self-Audit Tool in this document and for recommendation to its grantees.

6	The organisation makes clear that ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of children rests with senior executives (CEO and Directors) and managers.			
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## Standard 2: People

		A	B	C
1	There are written guidelines for behaviour (Code of Conduct) that provide guidance on appropriate/expected standards of behaviour towards children and of children towards other children.			
2	Recruitment processes have strong child safeguarding checks in place. Recruitment adverts, interviews and contracts all outline a commitment to child safeguarding.			
3	The organisation is open and aware when it comes to child safeguarding matters such that issues can be easily identified, raised and discussed. All members of staff, volunteers and associates have training on child safeguarding.			
4	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe, including information for children, parents/carers about where to go for help.			
5	The organisation designates key people at different levels (including Director level) as “focal points” with clear defined responsibilities, to champion, support and communicate on child safeguarding and for effective operation of the child safeguarding policy.			
6	Partner organisations are required and supported to develop minimum child safeguarding measures appropriate to their organisation.			

## Standard 3: Procedures

		A	B	C
1	The organisation requires local mapping exercises to be carried out that analyse the legal, social welfare and child protection arrangements in the context in which it works.			
2	There is an appropriate process for reporting and responding to child protection incidents and concerns that fits with the local systems for dealing with incidents of child abuse (as identified in the mapping exercise).			
3	The identification and mitigation of child safeguarding risk is incorporated into risk assessment processes at all levels, i.e. from identification of corporate risks through to planning an activity involving or impacting on children.			

4	Adequate human and financial resources are made available to support the development and implementation of child safeguarding measures.			
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5	There are clear procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on how to report safely which are also linked to the organisation’s disciplinary policy and procedures.			
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6	Child safeguards are integrated with and actively managed into existing business processes and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme cycle management, performance management, procurement, etc.) to ensure safeguarding children is a feature of all key aspects of operations.			
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## Standard 4: Accountability

		A	B	C
1	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with, and implementation of, child safeguarding policies and procedures through specific measures and/or integration into existing systems for quality assurance, risk management, audit, monitoring and review.			
2	There is a system of regular reporting to key management forums, including Director level, to track progress and performance on child safeguarding, including information on safeguarding issues and child protection cases.			
3	External or independent bodies such as Board of Trustees or oversight committees are used to monitor performance in this area and hold senior executives to account in relation to child safeguarding.			
4	Opportunities exist for learning from practical case experience to be fed back into organisational development.			
5	Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals and formally evaluated every three years.			
6	Progress, performance and lessons learnt are reported to key stakeholders (management forums and external or independent bodies where relevant) and included in the organisation’s annual reports.			

# Annex 5: Reporting Pro Forma

## Part I - Details of person receiving the disclosed allegation, suspicion, or concern

Name:

Position:

Contact Details:

Relationship to the child/young person:

## Part II - Details of the child/children who disclosed allegation, suspicion, or concern

Child/children's details (name(s), age(s), gender(s) and any other relevant details such as ethnicity, nationality, faith, etc.):

Child/children's address(es) (home and school if known):

Details of parents/carers:

## Part III - Details of the allegation, suspicion, or concern

Alleged abuser (name and details):

Relationship to child:

Role within project/grant (relationship to HDF):

Nature of concern/allegation. Describe in as much detail as possible, keeping to facts including date(s), time(s), and location(s) of incident(s), and where relevant using the language of the person making the disclosure:

Details of witness(es) present at the time of the incident (if no witnesses, state 'no witnesses'):

Observations made of child (e.g. description of cuts, bruising, withdrawal, child's emotional state, etc.):

If the child disclosed abuse or made an allegation, details of what exactly the child said in their own words:

# Annex 6: Useful Resources

Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=eng>

Convention on the Rights of the Child  
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011, Ireland  
<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>

Keeping Children Safe: Child Safeguarding Standards and How to Implement Them  
<https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/how-we-keep-children-safe/capacity-building/resources/child-safeguarding-standards-and-how-implement>

Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages  
<https://dochas.ie/images-and-messages>

InterAction, Step-by-step Guide to Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse  
<https://www.interaction.org/documents/interaction-guide-to-addressing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/>

NSPCC, Research and Resources  
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/>

External agencies contacted (if any) – date(s), time(s), name of person and any advice received/action taken:

Details of anyone else that has been told of, or knows about, the alleged incident(s) (if no additional people, state 'no additional people'):

Signature:

Date: