

Child Protection Policy

As of 4 July 2019



1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out ICAN's commitments, policies and practices with respect to the protection of children.

The policy applies to all ICAN's Board, staff, consultants, interns, volunteers or fellows.

In general, the organisation only has indirect contact with children. However, ICAN seeks to ensure that all those who participate in its work - staff, Board and ISG members, interns, consultants and partners - are people who understand the importance of protecting children.

ICAN is committed to modelling best practice in the area of protecting and safeguarding children and has developed this policy to formalise its child protection commitment, both to children and the families its representatives come into contact with.

This child protection policy will be regularly reviewed.

2. Guiding principles and policy context

2.1 Guiding principles

The child protection policy is guided by the following principles;

- ICAN recognises that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount;
- All children have the right to protection from abuse, irrespective of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Everybody has a responsibility to protect children; and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

Switzerland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1997. ICAN is fully committed to upholding the principles and commitments inherent in this binding international treaty.

2.2 Policy context

The development and implementation of this child protection policy has been informed by and is intended to be interpreted and applied consistently with the core principles enshrined in the following instruments:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Pour une politique Suisse de l'enfance et la jeunesse, Département fédéral de l'intérieur – Office fédéral des assurances sociales – Famille, générations et société – Confédération suisse, 2008.
- Keeping children safe toolkit, The Keeping Children Safe Coalition Member agencies, UK 2011.

3. Responding to allegations and suspicions of child abuse

3.1 Definition of child abuse

ICAN bases its policy on the World Health Organisation's definition of child abuse:

Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Exposure to intimate partner violence is also sometimes included as a form of child maltreatment.

This definition is intended to cover:

- Sexual abuse – Actual or threatened sexual exploitation of a child, including all forms of sexual activity such as rape, incest and pornography.
- Physical injury – Actual or likely physical injury to any child or a failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- Neglect – The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger including cold or starvation, failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in the impairment of the child's health or development.
- Emotional abuse – Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

All ICAN staff members, Board members and partners are expected to uphold the highest possible standards in the prevention of child abuse, including by reporting on allegations or suspicions of abuse wherever they may arise. This policy concerns the specific obligation of ICAN staff and partners to address such allegations and suspicions when they encounter them in the course of their work with ICAN, and sets out the procedure they should follow in such cases.

3.2 ICAN's child protection reporting procedure

ICAN is committed to responding effectively and sensitively to all allegations and suspicions of child abuse, both current and in the past.

To make ICAN's commitment to the protection of children a reality, the human resource focal point will act as the organisation's designated child protection officer (see Appendix 1 for roles and responsibilities and Appendix 4 for contact details).

The Designated Officer(s) will:

- Ensure adherence to this policy;
- Act as a liaison person with statutory services in matters relating to child protection (See Appendix 2 for the recording form);
- Act as resource person to the organisation providing support and guidance in matters relating to child protection.

The procedure detailed in Appendix 1 applies to the Designated Officer(s) and all ICAN staff, Board members and associated personnel whilst involved in local and overseas activities on behalf of ICAN.

If a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse comes to the attention of an ICAN staff or Board member, or an ICAN partner, whether in Geneva or while carrying out an overseas activity, this information must immediately be referred to the ICAN Designated Officer.

However, under no circumstances should a child be left at immediate risk/danger pending contact with the ICAN Designated Officer.

3.3 Recruitment and selection

ICAN acknowledges that effective child protection by the organisation starts with the appointment of suitable and qualified staff members who have the desired competences and skills to carry out their functions in an effective, efficient and safe manner, and who fully understand ICAN's policy in relation to child protection.

3.4 Communicating ICAN's safeguarding message.

ICAN will ensure that all staff, Board members and partners are aware of its child protection policy. The ICAN Executive Director and managers that recruit new staff members and partners are responsible for ensuring that they become fully familiar with the child protection policy and the procedures for reporting possible child abuse, including the use of the form attached as Appendix 2 and the image use policy as it relates to children (See Appendix 3). The Chairperson of the Board has similar responsibilities vis-à-vis new Board members.

3.5 Implementing and monitoring the standards

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that the implementation of the ICAN child protection policy is evaluated regularly. The Executive Director will also ensure that the policy is periodically reviewed, either at regular intervals or as the need arises, and that any modifications or new practices are incorporated and communicated to staff and Board members, as well as to partners.

A database of all incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse will be managed by the designated officer and stored in a secure and confidential location.

4. Roles and responsibilities

It is the Designated Officer's (D.O.) role to receive information from ICAN staff and Board members and partners where they have received or are aware of allegations or suspicions of child abuse. The D.O. is responsible for managing the allegation/disclosure or concern, including managing the preliminary inquiry and liaising with the police, the social services, and other local authorities. It is also his or her role to inform all people involved about how the inquiry is progressing (to be done in consultation with the authorities).

4.1 Detailed procedure for D.O.:

- Receive information about a concern or allegation
- Create a child protection case file
- Take possession of all original records/information and place in case file
- Where appropriate, explain the ICAN child protection procedure to the complainant and his or her parent(s)
- Make a child protection referral to the statutory services where appropriate and request a receipt in writing from the services for the child protection referral, and request to be kept informed of progress with the case.
- Contact the emergency services if a child is deemed to be at immediate risk
- Conduct an internal investigation (if the allegation/concern involves a member of the staff of ICAN or an ICAN partner) on conclusion of any external investigation (if appropriate), and implement, in consultation with the Executive Director and/or the Chairperson of the Board, any disciplinary procedures that may be necessary.

4.2 Procedure for all other staff and personnel

ICAN staff and Board members and partners should take the following actions if you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.

Please remember it is not your role to investigate

- Act immediately on any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.
- Refer all information to the D.O. as soon as possible. The D.O. will assess the information and pass it on to the statutory services if the allegation is in relation to a Swiss or US context. If the allegation/concern is in relation to an overseas context the D.O. will have a preliminary discussion with the staff/Board member that has received the initial complaint. A decision will then be made as to the most appropriate party in the field to whom the concern will be referred.
- Wherever possible, document the allegation in writing immediately, but not later than the end of that day.
- Assess the risk and make an immediate referral to the statutory services if you deem a child to be at immediate risk (i.e. do not wait to refer to the D.O. if a child is in immediate danger).
- Record all information on the ICAN child protection form; include all of the details, even those you think at the time may not be relevant.

- The D.O. will compile a child protection case file and will store all original copies of information in a safe and secure setting for retention.
- The contact details of the D.O. should be given to all persons making a child protection allegation/concern that the D.O. can explain to them the child protection procedure that ICAN follows.
- Maintain professional confidentiality at all times. Information shared in relation to child abuse allegations/concerns with the authorities is done in professional confidence.
- The D.O. will take the lead role in consulting with authorities and securing follow-up action and reporting.

5. APPENDIX 1 – Child protection recording form

To be used in cases where ICAN staff, Board members and /or partners have received allegations of child abuse.

 <p>Child protection recording form</p>
CONFIDENTIAL
1. About the incident/concern
Date of incident/concern:
Time of incident/concern:
Place of the incident/concern:
How was information received (attach any written information to this form) Telephone _____ Letter _____ Email _____ In Person _____
2. Details of child victim
Name : _____ Date of birth : _____
Address:
Tel: _____ Mobile: _____
Email:
Origin: _____ Language: _____
Disability / special needs:
3. Details of person reporting incident/raising concern
Name:

Address:	
Tel:	Mobile:
Email:	
Relationship to child/alleged victim:	
4. Details of alleged perpetrator	
Name:	
Address:	
Tel:	Mobile:
Relationship to child/alleged victim:	
Any additional information:	
5. Nature of incident/concern including relevant background	
Record child's word verbatim	
6. Action taken so far	
Please detail who you have been contacted so far (police/social services/local authorities...)	
7. Designated Officer details	
Signature	Date

***One copy must be retained by the recipient and filed in a secure location;
Another copy must be sent to the Designated Officer and the statutory
services.***

6. APPENDIX 2 – Using images of children

ICAN regularly uses images to accompany articles on its website and in its publications. As an organisation that relies on a positive professional reputation and represents the values enshrined in international human rights law, it is important that the way ICAN uses images serves to reinforce the organisation's values.

6.1 What images can be used?

Generally speaking, it is fine to use images that:

- Are obtained by consent and used with the appropriate authorisation or licence
- Do not abuse a person's right to privacy or unreasonably intrude into private or family life
- Do not demean or ridicule a person
- Do not inaccurately represent a person

For the purposes of this document, an 'identifiable individual' is any adult or child featured in a photograph whom it can be assumed could be identified in the picture by someone who knows them or knows of them.

6.2 Privacy

The photography subject's consent is not usually needed for straightforward photos taken in a public place, but is often needed for photos taken in a private place. As a matter of prudence, there should be an announcement made at the commencement of any ICAN event that photographs will be taken and may be used by ICAN at its discretion unless a person proactively indicates otherwise.

Photographs of an identifiable child normally do require consent, especially if they are accompanied by a caption which places the child which is potentially derogatory or demeaning (for example, a photograph of an identifiable child, with a caption regarding the 'problem of obesity in the USA').

6.3 How to select and use images of people

Be extremely sensitive to a person's vulnerability, particularly the vulnerability of a child, and always assess how a photo/story will impact on the rights, especially the safety and well-being, of the person being portrayed. Obtain express permission to use real names and locations in situations where disclosure could result in harm.

Photos and stories should respect human dignity. Do not portray people, including children, as helpless victims or exploit their trauma or grief.

Photos should not fully identify a sexually abused person of any age, unless the person specifically asks to be named and photographed. To protect the identity of sexually abused persons, publishing conventions include images that are in profile, or darkened, from the back, or obscure part of the face, so the subject cannot be recognised.

All images of children in whatever context must always be treated with extreme sensitivity.

Children and adults should always be adequately clothed in photos and not in sexually suggestive poses. Only images of children in suitable dress may be used. Do not use images of naked children. If a male child is naked from the waist up, but is clearly wearing appropriate clothing below the waist, the reason for the attire is evident and the image is not sexually suggestive (for example, the child is playing football), then the image may be used if it is relevant to the article. However, do not use images of female children or infants who are naked from the waist up (or, of course, the waist down).

Do not use images of identifiable children in articles dealing with sensitive issues such as child trafficking and prostitution, children in armed conflict, rape, torture, etc. Acceptable use of images of children that could be identified would be, for example, in the case of an article talking about education, or child rights or human rights in general.

If ever in doubt about the appropriateness of using a particular photo, either don't use it, or liaise with the Communications department to assess the implications of its use.

7. APPENDIX 3 – Local authorities to be informed of a child abuse allegation documented by ICAN

7.1 Geneva

- Service de protection des mineurs <http://www.ge.ch/spmi/> Call 022 546 10 00
- Police <http://www.ge.ch/police/> Call 022 427 81 11