

CODE OF CONDUCT

Protecting children

Defence for Children International - ECPAT International the Netherlands (hereafter: DCI-ECPAT NL) is a non-governmental organization focused on the rights of the child and as such engages in protecting children against all forms of abuse and harm, and looks after their wellbeing including the promotion of their rights without reservation as stated in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of a Child.

The DCI-ECPAT NL Child Protection Code of Conduct is a statement of the expectations the organization has of its employees and others involved when in contact with children and young persons. It describes a behavior protocol with rules of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, based on the DCI-ECPAT NL Child Protection Policy. The primary purpose of this protocol is to protect children from any harm done by us but also to protect adults from false accusations of inappropriate behavior or abuse. The Director is authorized to take any necessary measure when the Code of Conduct is not observed.

Signing to the Code of Conduct commits the signatory to actively participate in building and maintaining an environment which is safe for children and their families.

This Code applies to all DCI-ECPAT NL staff and anyone acting as a representative of, or on behalf of DCI ECPAT NL: interns, volunteers, board members, consultants, (external) advisors, and any participants visitors of the agency's projects.

All DCI-ECPAT NL staff and anyone acting as a representative of, or on behalf of DCI ECPAT NL must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Minimizing Risk Situations

I will:

1. Be aware of and behave according the Child Protection Policy and this Code of Conduct.
2. Ensure that a culture of openness exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially harmful or abusive behavior does not go unchallenged.
3. Treat children with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender, colour of skin, language, religion, political or other conviction, nationality, ethnical or social background, disability, et cetera.
4. Empower children: inform them on their rights, teach them what is acceptable behavior of adults towards them, what not and what they can do if something occurs.
5. Be aware of situations which may present risks to harm children and report and manage these.
6. Realise that children are vulnerable for abuse – the children involved in the work of DCI-ECPAT are often more vulnerable or already victim of abuse.
7. Follow the "two adult"-rule for physical encounters, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where minors or children are involved and are present at all times. If this is not possible, staff members are encouraged to look for alternatives.

8. As far as possible, be visible in working with children. I will try to meet with a child in a location the child prefers, which is a public location whenever possible.
9. Ensure that all people working/visiting an institution or community on behalf of DCI-ECPAT NL are introduced by appropriate DCI-ECPAT NL staff or partner organizations staff.
10. Immediately note the circumstances of any situation which occurs which may be subject to misinterpretation by a third party by notifying the child protection officer (in short: CPO), who keeps a log book.

I will never:

1. Condone, or participate in, behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
2. Spend time alone with a single child or young person with whom I have a work relationship with, away from others, behind closed doors or in a secluded area.
3. Take children I have a work relationship with home or to another space where they will be alone with me.
4. Discriminate, show favoritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child with whom I have a work relationship with.

Psychosocial behavior

I will:

1. Uphold the practice of non-discrimination at all times, including age, gender, race, language, religion, and disability.
2. Be a positive role model, for instance by treating girls and boys equally and apologizing for mistakes made.
3. Demonstrate encouragement/motivation by giving compliments on behavior and actions of the child.
4. Be aware of the power balance between an adult and a child and avoid taking any advantages this may provide.
5. Treat all children with respect and take notice of their reactions and adjust my tone of voice and manner.
6. Listen carefully to children and pose open questions.
7. Inform and consult children at all time on all matters affecting them.
8. Try as much as possible to always involve children in decision-making. Allow children to make their own decisions, particularly about their own lives. All are responsible to create an enabling environment where children are encouraged and able to express themselves, and raise issues affecting them for discussion.
9. Empower children – discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.
10. Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns.
11. Act on children's concerns / problems immediately.
12. Commit myself to creating a culture of openness and mutual accountability at workplaces to enable all child protection issues to be raised and discussed.
13. Contribute to create and/or uphold an environment where children are listened to and respected as individuals.
14. Ensure when making images of children (photos, videos or otherwise) that they are decent and respectful, that the children are adequately clothed and that sexually suggestive poses are avoided.

I will never:

1. Abuse the power and influence that I have by virtue of my position over the lives and well-being of any child or any other vulnerable person.
2. React judgmental, negative or rejective towards the child, insinuate things or openly question the credibility of the child's story.
3. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
4. Suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind.
5. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, stigmatize or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse .
6. Without good reason, share confidential information about a child, children and/or his family.

Physical behavior**I will:**

1. Wait for appropriate physical contact such as holding hands, to be initiated by the child.
2. Ask informed consent¹ from children before taking photographs of a child/children or (a) young person(s) except under exceptional circumstances, based on the child/children's best interest, where this might not be possible or desirable.

I will never:

1. Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
2. Hold, fondle, kiss, cuddle or touch children, young persons or other vulnerable persons with whom I have a work relationship in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way.
3. Engage in activities involving close body contact with children, young persons or vulnerable persons with whom I have a work relationship, beyond the professional requirement.
4. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
5. Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to a child, young person or other vulnerable person, even as a joke.
6. Actively or passively engage children in child labour activities, nor will I condone this in my direct environment.
7. Conduct or be part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.
8. Neglect children e.g. not meeting children's needs, not offering adequate care to children
9. Deploy any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation or favouritism, such as:
 - A. Developing relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative, abusive or otherwise harmful; or
 - B. Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

¹ Informed consent exists when the child and the parent(s)/caregiver(s) know(s) for what purpose the material is made, in what way(s) it will be used, by whom and what the possible consequences are in the short and long term.

Sexual behavior

I will never:

1. Develop physical / sexual relationships with a child.
2. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
3. Engage in or allow sexually provocative games with children to take place.
4. Have a child/children with whom I am working stay overnight at my home unsupervised.
5. Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom I am working.
6. Do things of a personal nature that a child could do for her/himself, including dressing, bathing and grooming.
7. Purchase any sexual services, regardless of the age of the secondary individual, and regardless of the legality of the exchange, online or offline.
8. Engage in any form of activity of a sexual nature with any person below the age of 18 years, online or offline.
9. Be personally involved in any way in, inter alia, the viewing, possessing, producing or distributing of child pornography; child sex tourism; trafficking of children; and any other form of sexual exploitation.

Use of Social Media

I will:

1. If active on twitter, I will add to my account: 'Tweets are personal.'

I will never:

2. Invite children that are involved with DCI-ECPAT NL to connect to my personal social media accounts.

Peer Abuse

I will:

1. Be aware of the potential for peer-to-peer abuse.
2. Encourage DCI-ECPAT NL's partners to develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from their peers.
3. Avoid placing children in high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children).

I will never:

1. Allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other, bully or exclude each other.
2. Encourage children to fight with each other, insult or exclude each other.

Reporting

I will:

- 1. Respond to all child protection concerns, allegations or disclosures according to the reporting guidelines.
- 2. Immediately bring to the attention of DCI-ECPAT NL any instance of witnessed or suspected abuse, and any action or behavior that could be construed as poor practice or potentially harmful and/or abusive.
- 3. Bring every presumed case of child abuse to the attention of the Director of DCI-ECPAT, who in turn will take action and if need be will submit the matter to competent local authorities who will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. I am aware that any employee or partner who would make a false and malicious allegation will face disciplinary/ legal action.

I have clearly read and understand the DCI-ECPAT NL Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and will adhere at all times to the standards of behavior described in it.

I declare that I have never been convicted of any offence involving any type of harm to a child, children, young or vulnerable person, nor have I ever been warned or cautioned in relation to such a matter. I also declare that there are no civil or criminal proceedings of any nature pending against me at the date of this declaration relating to any allegation concerning any type of harm to a child or children.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute poor practice, potentially harmful and/or abusive behavior and/or is not in the best interest of the child, young person or otherwise vulnerable person or even - constitutes a child rights violation.

Name:

Date:

Signature: