



Help a
CHILD

Annex 1

Code of Conduct

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Help a Child Code of Conduct - Introduction | 3 |
| 1. Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct | 4 |
| 1.1 Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct - general | 4 |
| 1.2 Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct – vulnerable groups..... | 7 |
| 1.3 Minimum standards for protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEAH)..... | 9 |
| 2. Duty to Report and Reporting Mechanism | 10 |
| 2.1 Duty to Report | 10 |
| 2.2 Reporting Mechanism..... | 10 |
| 3. Consequence of Breach of Code of the Code of Conduct | 11 |



Help a Child Code of Conduct - Introduction

The Help a Child Code of Conduct constitutes Annex 1 of the Help a Child Integrity & PSEAH Policy.

This code is mandatory for all representatives at Help a Child, irrespective of whether they have signed an employment contract. The Code of Conduct is derived from the protection principles as mentioned in the Integrity Policy, and covers the following components:

- Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct;
- Minimum standards for prevention against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment;
- An explanation of the duty to report and the use of reporting mechanisms;
- Consequences of a breach of the Help a Child Code of Conduct;
- Procedures on the review of the Help a Child Code of Conduct.

To achieve our objectives, mission, and core values, Help a Child wants to uphold its reputation as a respected NGO with integrity. As a representative of Help a Child, you represent the organization both in your professional endeavors and personal life. Representatives should remember that they are representing the organization at all times and should therefore not indulge in behavior that may compromise the integrity or professionalism of the organization.

We believe that the motivation with which we do our work makes a difference. As Help a Child colleagues we are inspired to love, called to justice, moved to mercy, invited to reconciliation, motivated to stewardship and dependent of God. These Christian principles inspire us to give our best in all circumstances.

As a Help a Child representative, we expect you to always behave in full compliance with our organizational core values and our integrity values. This Code of Conduct serves to uphold our standards of behavior, emphasizing the importance of maintaining professionalism and ethical conduct. While this code cannot cover every possible scenario, if you have any concerns regarding its application in specific situations, you are encouraged to discuss them with your line manager and/or the HR Department at our Global Office.



51. Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct

This section sets out general categories of expected behavior and specifies prohibited acts.

1.1 Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct - general

We treat everybody equally and with dignity:

- Our representatives do not discriminate on the basis of any distinction, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, language, age, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, political conviction, and religion. Discrimination refers to treating someone differently based on any personal identification marker. Common forms may include making employment or programmatic decisions based on a personal identification marker.
- Our representatives stay away from behavior and actions that show a lack of respect for the dignity of others, e.g. bullying, verbal or physical harassment¹, exploitation, intimidation and victimization.

We are well-clothed and show respect for religious and culturally sensitive issues:

Representatives should dress appropriately, respecting cultural and religious sensitivities, and adhere to local office norms.

We avoid conflict of interest: A conflict of interest, or a perceived conflict of interest, occurs when an employee is using their position for personal gain or when individual's personal interests, outside employment, financial interests, acceptance of gifts, travel, entertainment, or involvement of family and relationships in work-related issues could potentially interfere with their ability to make impartial decisions in the best interest of Help a Child.

Representatives are required to avoid conflicts of interest as much as possible. In situations where a conflict is unavoidable, it must be disclosed proactively to a line manager or the Integrity Coordinator. This includes, but is not limited to, situations involving outside employment, financial interests, acceptance of gifts that exceed nominal value, and the involvement of family members or close relationships in work-related decisions or activities.

¹ Harassment is any act or conduct including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, if the action or conduct is unwelcome to the recipient and could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

We use the property of Help a Child with care:

- Our representatives will handle the property of Help a Child, such as mobile phones, computers, laptops, tablets, presentation equipment and printers, with care and attention. This also means that such equipment cannot be left unattended in a vehicle. After work, laptops and tablets are taken home or stored in a cabinet. The users of equipment and keys that are property of Help a Child must sign a loan form.

Smoking, alcohol and drugs: As an organization, we recognize the importance of respecting the laws and cultural norms of the countries where we operate. We require all personnel to acquaint themselves with and abide by the laws of their own country. Additionally, we expect everyone to respect and be sensitive about cultural differences that can exist within our own team as well as working with our partners.

Smoking: Smoking is strictly prohibited within the premises of any Help a Child workplace. This policy is in place to ensure a healthy and safe environment for all employees and visitors.

Alcohol/Drugs: Substance use of alcohol and/or drugs negatively affects your health, performance at work, and commitment to Help a Child and our project participants. Being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and/or other substances while carrying out your work or representing Help a Child is not tolerated. Representatives must always maintain professionalism and not engage in behaviour that may compromise the integrity or professionalism of the organization.

Celebrations: Parties or informal get-togethers on Help a Child premises and/or on behalf of Help a Child must first be approved by the Country Director/line manager. Moderate and limited consumption of alcohol at such events is permitted only outside working hours and upon prior approval by the CEO. In practice, this means never consuming more than two alcoholic beverages, aligning with most countries' legal limits on responsible alcohol use. Being under the influence drugs and/or other substances is not tolerated.

External social functions: While representing Help a Child at external functions where alcohol is permitted, staff are expected to exercise restraint and, if socially unavoidable, use alcohol responsibly. Representatives should always bear in mind that they are ambassadors of the organization and should not indulge in behaviour that could compromise its integrity or professionalism. In practice, this means never consuming more than two alcoholic beverages, aligning with most countries' legal limits on responsible alcohol use. Being under the influence drugs and/or other substances is not tolerated.

We stay away from use of fire arms: Our representatives do not use or have in their possession fire arms at any time.

We use internet (incl. email) properly and do not use illegal software.

Our representatives:

- will not visit pornographic, racist, discriminating, or abusive internet sites and/or chat rooms or download offensive material or visit sites of which the content is against the law, unethical or threatening.
- are not permitted to install software from Help a Child illegally on their own computer or computers of third parties.
- will handle business email messages correctly regardless of whether they are sent from the office, home or another place: emails should not be offensive or controversial, not contain information too sensitive for this medium and should be used for business only.

We behave properly when it comes to personal use of social media: Our representatives will not harm Help a Child's efforts to position itself as a professional organization both online and offline. Representatives should adhere to the following rules to protect the organization and all its representatives against negative consequences of social media behavior.

- Respect privacy. Do not place pictures or texts with a reference to a person without their consent (or parent consent) and keep (full) names and addresses confidential.
- When making public statements – whether on personal or professional title – consider critically whether these messages are in line with the identity and values of Help a Child.
- Use a disclaimer when expressing an opinion about work-related topics.
- Be transparent when discussing work-related information and experiences and at the same time keep internal agreements on confidentiality and safety. Add value and refrain from comments on the work of colleagues within this or other organizations.
- Feel free to respond to critical comments of others on Help a Child or its work but stay with the facts and react in a respectful way.²
- Be open about a mistake. Correct it visibly and, if needed, explain what went wrong.
- When receiving a message from Help a Child to remove a picture or message about our work, then the organization expects our representatives to do this as soon as possible.

² In many cases it is wise to respond via the organization's own social media channels, so always inform Help a Child's Communication Team when reading messages about the organization on social media

- Do not discuss sensitive information or details on your residence if this could lead to security issues for yourself or others. Do not give burglars a chance and do not tell them when you are travelling or when a certain place is unmanned.

1.2 Expected behavior and prohibited misconduct – vulnerable groups

We protect vulnerable groups: our representatives will do their utmost best to protect all vulnerable groups against against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) or threat of abuse. We stay away from and strongly reject any abuse of power:

- Any form of violence including, but not limited to: bullying, verbal, physical or sexual-harassment³, rape, exploitation, intimidation, and victimization;
- Behavior that shows a lack of respect for the dignity of others including breaching of confidentiality;
- Behaving in a manner which leads to, or could potentially lead to health or security problems for the person themselves or for other people;
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, compromising or exploitative behavior.
- Withholding goods that are due to Help a Child's program participants to obtain gifts, payment or sex – including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, compromising or exploitative behavior – from program participants.

Being a child-focused organization we consider it especially important to safeguard the well-being of children. The remainder of section 1.2 sets out general categories of expected behavior and specifies prohibited acts regarding **child safeguarding**.

We uphold a safe and open environment for children. Our representatives:

- are committed to creating a culture of openness and mutual accountability at workplaces to enable all child protection issues to be raised and discussed.
- contribute to creating and/or upholding an environment where children are listened to and respected as individuals and what is safe, positive, and encouraging to them.

We pay special attention to the needs of children and our behavior towards children: We treat all children with respect and we:

- Take notice of their reactions to our tone of voice and manner.

³ Sexual harassment is defined as any: act of physical intimacy; request for sexual favors; other act or conduct including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material that is unwelcome and could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating.

- Ensure when making images of children (photos, video etc.) that they are respectful, that the children are adequately clothed and that sexually suggestive poses are avoided.
- Follow the “two-adult” rule; at all times, two or more adults are present and supervise activities where minors or children are involved.

We refrain from any behavior that might have a negative impact on the well-being of children: We acknowledge that our behavior might have (unintended) negative impact on the well-being of children. Therefore, we remain from potential harmful behavior. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Hold, fondle, kiss, cuddle or touch children or other vulnerable persons including caregivers in inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way.
- Engage in activities involving close body contact with children or vulnerable persons beyond what is required professionally.
- Spend time alone with a child, away from others in a secluded area.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to a child, even as a joke.
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or vulnerable persons. All disciplinary measures are non-violent and do not humiliate.
- Act in a way intended to shame, humiliate, or belittle children or other vulnerable persons, or otherwise perpetuate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favors certain children or other vulnerable persons to the exclusion of others.
- Develop relationships with children or other vulnerable persons that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Condone, or participate in behavior with children or other vulnerable persons that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Actively or passively engage children in child labor activities, nor will we condone this in our direct environment.
- Conduct or be part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.

We refrain from misusing our power/position: We refrain from any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, or favoritism. We will never abuse the power and influence that we have by virtue of our position over the lives and well-being of any child, or any other vulnerable person.



1.3 Minimum standards for protection against sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEAH)

We acknowledge that sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment is a serious breach of our Code of Conduct. Any proven instances of any forms of harassment or sexual threat or abuse will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. See for more information the integrity & PSEAH policy.

Cooperative arrangements:

- All Help a Child's contracts and partnership agreements include a standard clause requiring contractors, suppliers, consultants and sub-partners to commit to a zero-tolerance policy on SEAH and to take measures to prevent and respond to SEAH.
- The failure of those entities or individuals to take preventive measures against SEAH, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective action when SEAH has occurred, shall constitute grounds for termination of any cooperative arrangement.

2. Duty to Report and Reporting Mechanism

2.1 Duty to Report

It is the duty of all Help a Child representatives who become aware of any breaches of the Help a Child Code of Conduct to report this immediately to a line manager or a relevant Integrity Focal Person or the Integrity Coordinator, either through the established reporting mechanism or, if not appropriate, to another senior member of staff.

Management must ensure that all information about breaches of this Code is handled with the utmost discretion. Any concerns or suspicions about a suspected incident of exploitation, harassment or bullying of program participants or colleagues, whether major or minor, should always be discussed with an Integrity Focal Person, line manager or other senior member of staff.

Failure to report concerns of (sexual) exploitation, abuse and harassment will constitute misconduct and be considered grounds for disciplinary measures. No action will be taken against a person reporting concerns in good faith, and the person will be protected against retaliation. Any of our representatives making false accusations of any action by another representative of Help a Child, which breaches the Code of Conduct, will be subject to disciplinary action at the employer's discretion.

2.2 Reporting Mechanism

Breaches or any suspicion of a breach to this Code of Conduct should be reported using the Help a Child complaints procedure⁴. The suspected breach will be investigated in accordance with the same complaints procedure.

⁴ See Annex 4 of the Integrity Policy for the Feedback, Complaints and Whistle Blowing Procedure of Help a Child, which can also be found online at <https://www.helpachild.org/documents> and on SharePoint.

3. Consequence of Breach of Code of the Code of Conduct

Help a Child recognizes the pressure and stress working in relief projects and fragile environments and acknowledges the organizational responsibility when it comes to staff care. Therefore, it supports staff with the staff care measures as mentioned in section 3.5 of the Integrity Policy to minimize stress.

However, Help a Child expects that, when signing an employment contract with Help a Child, our representatives acknowledge their own responsibility towards their behavior and actions. Any proven breach of the Help a Child Code of Conduct and any proven misconduct will result in disciplinary action. Depending on the severity, appropriate action might include a written warning, probation or termination of contract and legal action if required, as described in the employment conditions manual.

Furthermore, disciplinary measures will be taken against our representatives

- for retaliating against a colleague who reports concerns or otherwise cooperates with an investigation;
- for maliciously and falsely reporting misconduct; and
- for not cooperating with an investigation.

If the claim is deemed unfounded the representative's record will be cleared.



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