




Save the Children



Save the Children Behavior & Conduct Guidelines

Questions? Email SafeguardingSCUS@savechildren.org





The aim of this document is to help Save the Children U.S. (SCUS) Representatives (including employees, volunteers, interns, consultants, and Trustees), as well as Partners and Program Visitors, understand prohibited behaviors and preventative actions related to safeguarding children and adults.

SCUS Representatives must demonstrate the highest standards of behavior and conduct in their private and professional lives, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It is important to note that this document provides practical examples of behaviors that would be considered conduct violations under key policies such as the Code of Ethics, Safeguarding and Counter-Human Trafficking Policy and Procedures, and/or program specific policies such as the Head Start Child Abuse and Neglect Policy. These examples are not an exhaustive or exclusive list. There may be other behaviors that constitute safeguarding policy violations, and SCUS Representatives should seek guidance from the National Safeguarding Team if they are uncertain.

All SCUS Representatives must report safeguarding concerns, suspicions, and known incidents - no matter how trivial the issue may seem - within 24 hours of becoming aware of the concern. Reports may be made anonymously. Reporting pathways include:

- Phone: (844) 287-1892
- Online: savethechildren.ethicspoint.com
(access via QR Code to the right)
- Email: safeguardingscus@savechildren.org or hotline@savechildren.org
- In person: Speak with your line manager or safeguarding practitioner





Prohibited Conduct & Behaviors


All exploitation, abuse, and harm toward child and adult program participants is prohibited at Save the Children.


Child Abuse is defined as anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. Abuse may occur through direct contact, online or without the knowledge of the child. The main categories of Child Abuse defined in this document are Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Grooming.

Physical Abuse is defined as the use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of injury or suffering to a child. Physical force includes but is not limited to hitting, shaking, kicking, pinching, pushing/pulling, grabbing, burning, female genital mutilation, torture, and other physical acts. Physical injury or suffering may include but is not limited to bruises, marks, soft tissue swelling, hematomas, fractures, sprains, dislocations, burns, damage to organs, death, permanent disfigurements, and any other non-trivial injuries.

Please note that corporal or physical punishment is defined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which oversees the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light.”

Emotional Abuse is defined as harm to a child’s emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological development occurring as an isolated event or on an ongoing basis. Emotional abuse includes but is not limited to any humiliating or degrading treatment (e.g., bad name-calling, threats, yelling, screaming, cursing, teasing, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, etc.), failure to meet a child’s emotional needs, and/or rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, isolating, or confining a child.







Neglect is defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs either deliberately or through negligence. Neglect includes but is not limited to failing to provide adequate food, sufficient or seasonally-appropriate clothing and/or shelter; failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment or providing inappropriate medical treatment (e.g., administering medication when not authorized); or failing to provide a safe physical environment (e.g., exposure to violence, unsafe programming location, unsafe sleeping practices, releasing a child to an unauthorized adult, access to weapons or harmful objects, failing to child-proof a space that children will occupy, engaging in any activity during work hours that may impair your judgement, such as drinking alcohol or using harmful substances, supplying alcohol or harmful substances to a child or vulnerable adult, etc.).

Sexual Abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. It includes all forms of sexual violence and coercion, sexual solicitation, manipulation, or trickery including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in or exposure to indecent images/video (aka pornography), sexual slavery/trafficking, and statutory rape. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including on the internet). Any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is considered sexual abuse.

Sexual Exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including but is not limited to profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.





Sexual exploitation and abuse by employees constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.

Any sexual activity between a Save the Children Representative and an adult program participant or caretaker of a child program participant is prohibited, except in the circumstance that such relationship predates one or both parties' involvement with SCUS Representatives are required to disclose to their line manager any pre-existing relationships.

Grooming generally refers to behavior that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child or vulnerable adult for sexual activity. It often involves the act of building the trust of children and/or their carers or a vulnerable adult to gain access to them to sexually abuse them. For example, grooming includes attention paid to a specific child or adult, providing gifts, money, drugs, or alcohol to them, encouraging romantic feelings, or exposing them to sexual concepts through conversation or exposure to pornography.

Online grooming is the act of sending an electronic message or series of messages, or engaging over an online platform with content that may be of an indecent nature, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including (but not necessarily) the sender.




SCUS Representatives can access the Safeguarding and Counter-Human Trafficking Policy by taking a photo of the QR code to the left.





SCUS Dos & Don'ts

Regardless of context, Save the Children expects that a Representative:


- Acts as a positive behavior model (children imitate what they see, and your role as a model of appropriate language, behavior, and use of materials is very important).
 - Respects and promotes the unique identity of children and adult program participants. Be aware of anyone with special needs and vulnerabilities but challenge negative stereotypes on any basis, including race, color, ethnicity, age, religion or religious creed or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, transgender status, sexual stereotypes, nationality, immigration status, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, perceived or actual, past or present physical, mental, learning or intellectual disability, medical condition, genetic information/characteristics, HIV/AIDS status, political views or activity, veteran status, status as a survivor of violence or assault, or any other basis protected by law.
 - Be mindful of key program policies and procedures, such as Head Start's:
 - Daily Health Check Policy
 - Risk Mitigation Policy - Classroom Staffing & Closure
 - Visitor & Volunteer & Consultant Policy
 - Active Supervision
 - Behavior Guidance Policy
 - Quiet Period Policy
 - Kids Counting Zone Policy
 - Medication Administration Policy
 - Safe Sleep Practices & SIDS/Suffocation Risk Reduction Policy
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Interacting with Children & Families Outside of the Classroom



Do


- Be proactive to seek out and listen to the views of the children and adults within the communities we partner with; inform them of their rights and the behavior and conduct they can expect from SCUS Representatives and partner staff acting on our behalf
 - Disclose to your line manager any pre-existing relationships and seek their guidance about appropriate boundaries with community members and program participants (e.g., if you provide childcare/babysitting to a family outside of your Save the Children role)
 - Ensure you are following Save the Children policies and procedures when engaging with content on a child's account if you follow a child's social media account due to their public persona (e.g., a child celebrity or activist)
 - Ensure all communications with child program participants are through appropriate channels (e.g., Save the Children email addresses or official social media accounts). If for some reason you need to communicate with a child program participant outside of official channels, inform your line manager
 - Consult with your line manager for guidance and direction on how to proceed if a program participant or their family member contacts you or sends a social media request to your personal account
 - Consult Save the Children's Social Media Policy for more information
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Don't

- Give gifts, special treatment, or praise that is directed only to a particular child program participant and/or family members
- Engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with an adult receiving program benefits from Save the Children, unless it is a preexisting relationship and has been disclosed to your line manager
- Have a child program participant who is not part of your family stay overnight in your home or stay overnight anywhere else with a program participant who is not part of your family
- Sleep in the same bed or in the same room as a child program participant who is not a part of your family
- Drive child or adult program participants who are not part of your family from Save the Children programs in a privately owned vehicle
- Disclose specific information regarding the location of our programs or any information that could endanger the wellbeing of children, adults, or staff
- Reveal Personal Identifiable Information about program participants except when permitted by SCUS' Personal Information Protection Policy
- Give your personal information to Save the Children program participants, including personal mobile phone numbers, social networking accounts, personal website/ blog URLs, online image storage sites, passwords/ PIN numbers, etc
- Use personal phone, email, text, social media, or web-based communication to send personal messages to communicate with Save the Children program participants
- Knowingly play online games with Save the Children program participants including children, young people, adults or their parents or carers. This can be difficult so check before you play online with someone you don't know




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- Hire or use children for work that is illegal, inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or places them at significant risk of injury

Discipline



Save the Children staff will respond to all child behavior as communication. Children use behavior to communicate their needs, and staff are expected to respond with understanding and compassion. SCUS Representatives are not expected to place their own safety at risk in responding to violence or aggression from others.

Do

- Patiently state and remind children of the rules using positive language, such as, “we walk inside”, as opposed to yelling “stop running.”
 - Understand and accept age-appropriate behavior (e.g., messiness, assertiveness, crying, resistance, etc.)
 - Use verbal directions rather than physical intervention
 - Where a child is exhibiting unsafe behavior that poses immediate risk to themselves or others:
 - Talk with the individual child or young person (asking the child or young person to stop their behavior and telling them what will happen if he/she does not stop)
 - Request assistance from other SCUS Representatives
 - Temporarily block movement to prevent injury (e.g., holding a toddler back from biting another toddler or blocking a preschooler from running out the door of the center). In cases where there is an immediate risk and you temporarily block movement, let go of the child immediately after preventing injury.
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Don't

- Rough handle, shove, pull hair, shake, slap, kick, bite, pinch, hit or spank
- Bind or tie a child to restrict movement or tape a child's mouth
- Hold children against their will (e.g., on lap, between legs or on the floor)
- Use restrictive environments such as play pens, highchairs, infant swings, walkers, or car/infant seats as a form of discipline
- Yell or raise your voice (unless a child is in danger)
- Isolate a child and leave them unsupervised
- Use "time out" as a punishment
- Ignore a child for an extended period of time
- Use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean, or humiliate a child, including inappropriate diaper procedures (e.g., leaving a child in a soiled diaper)
- Use or withhold food as a punishment or reward
- Use name calling, ostracism or shaming, or make derogatory remarks about a child or his/her family, or use language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens a child
- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favoritism toward particular children to the exclusion of others





Appropriate Contact with Children & Adults





In addition to the physical conduct covered in the 'Discipline' section, SCUS expects all Representatives to adhere to the following guidelines regarding appropriate contact with children and adults.

Do

- Display high standards of professional behavior at all times and live Save the Children's values
- Create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of the Code of Ethics. Line Managers at all levels have a responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain this environment

Don't


- Kiss, cuddle, or touch a child or adult in an abusive, unnecessary, or culturally insensitive way. This includes touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts, or any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
 - Invade the individual's privacy and make physical contact to provide care for individuals with disabilities without their agreement and consent
 - Engage in any activity that involves the exposure of the child's body when the child can do this for themselves. This includes dressing and toileting
 - Engage in any sexual activity with an individual under the age of 18
 - Supply alcohol or harmful substances to a child or vulnerable adult
 - Engage in any harmful and traditional practices including female genital mutilation, child marriage, and enforced marriage
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- Request anything of personal benefit in exchange for Save the Children assistance or services
 - Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior. This includes the exchange of assistance or services that are due to a program participant
 - Expose child or adult program participants to inappropriate images, films, music, and websites, including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and violence
 - Use Save the Children IT systems or Save the Children devices to access, store, send or publish pornographic, sexually exploitative images or texts of any nature

Use of Data and Images



Do

- Get written approval from your Division VP or the Chief Marketing Officer before using a personal phone or camera to collect images, video, or audio recordings for Save the Children
 - Follow IT procedures and guidelines for security requirements if using a personal mobile device (i.e., enable PIN/password and download security applications)
 - Ensure children and adult's images are culturally sensitive and appropriate when photographing or filming a child or adult or using children or adult's images or other information for work related purposes
 - Always respect an individual's dignity and their need to be safeguarded when taking photographs, filming, or writing reports
 - Obtain proper informed consent or assent, that is disability-inclusive and accessible, from a child or adult program participant to use photos, videos, artwork, or stories for the sole purpose of Save the Children business
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Supervision

Do



- Ensure that no child is left alone or unsupervised while in the care of a Save the Children Representative
- Engage in Active Supervision as the most effective strategy for creating a safe environment and preventing injuries in young children
- Follow the two-adult rule where possible and practical, or when a program requirement (such as in Head Start). The two-adult rule requires that two or more adults supervise all activities, and are always present, where children are involved
- In situations where the two-adult rule is not possible (i.e., when working with children with personal care needs, such as support when changing or going to the toilet), work with other staff and caregivers to agree to clear processes around the two-adult rule based on what is necessary and appropriate to safeguard and uphold their dignity. Document and gain consent on agreed processes

Don't

- Fail to ensure adequate supervision
- Engage in any activity during work hours that may impair your judgement or ability to supervise children responsibly, such as drinking alcohol or using harmful substances
- Use personal cell phones when you are responsible for the direct supervision of children in care. All personal electronic devices should be stored away and used only on approved breaks, unless approved by a line manager or program leader






Maintaining a Safe, Inclusive, and Healthy Environment


Do



- Provide a safe physical environment for Save the Children programs, including child-proofing locations where children will be present
- Understand and be aware of the potential risks and vulnerabilities of all children and adults, including those with disabilities, in our programs to ensure an inclusive programming environment
- Where it is Save the Children's responsibility to do so, provide adequate food, sufficient or seasonally appropriate clothing, medical care, and/or shelter in accordance with applicable procedures

Don't

- Expose children and adults under Save the Children's care to violence or unsafe programming locations
 - Release a child to an unauthorized adult
 - Administer medication without proper authorization
 - Store medication in a location where it is accessible by children
 - Refer to a child or adult with disabilities by their disability type; instead use their given or preferred name
 - Refer to or single out children or adults with disabilities as examples of vulnerability
 - Request that children or adults keep any aspect of their relationship secret or use tactics to keep any aspect of the relationship secret
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Safeguarding Questions?



If you have questions about the contents of this guide or your safeguarding responsibilities as a Save the Children Representative, you can seek guidance by reaching out to:

- Your line manager
- Your team leader
- Your division's Safeguarding Advisor or Safeguarding Focal Point (if you do not know who this is, ask your line manager)
- The SCUS National Safeguarding Team is reachable at SafeguardingSCUS@savechildren.org or during [Safeguarding Office Hours](#) (access the sign-up page by taking a photo of the QR code below)



Please note that any knowledge or suspicion of exploitation or abuse of program participants or community members by SCUS Representatives, Partners, or Program Visitors must be immediately reported by phone to 844-287-1892, online at [SavetheChildren.EthicsPoint.com](https://www.savethechildren.org/ethicspoint), or to your line manager or a safeguarding staff member. Reporters have the option to report anonymously.

