



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Policy

Children who come into contact with projects and activities organised by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat must be protected and safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from actions that place them at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, injury and any other harm.

This responsibility falls upon all staff and representatives of the CBSS Secretariat and representatives of project partners and experts involved in CBSS related activities.

The Policy requires:

- CBSS Secretariat to recruit staff that are suited to apply strict child safeguarding practices.
- That everyone associated with CBSS is aware of their obligations and responds appropriately to issues of violence, abuse, exploitation, injury or other harm against children.
- That anyone representing or acting on behalf of the CBSS Secretariat behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being associated with the CBSS Secretariat.
- That everyone representing CBSS take part in creating a safe environment for children who come into contact with the organisation.
- That representatives organising child participation events sign the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- That everyone associated with the CBSS is aware of and adheres to the CBSS Guidance on photos of children (Annex 1).

This Policy applies to:

- The CBSS Secretariat staff, whether national, international, full time, part time or engaged on short-term contracts, e.g., interns, consultants, researchers etc.
- Project partners, representatives from external agencies and volunteers cooperating with CBSS Secretariat, when child participation is involved.
- Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians, and other people who take part in activities organised by CBSS Secretariat involving child participation.

The CBSS Secretariat commits to regularly informing all staff members about the child safeguarding policy, including reporting mechanisms and appropriate behaviour.

Breaches in the policy will lead to reporting to the CBSS Director General and/or the CBSS Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or appropriate national authority. Breaches of the policy can lead to possible dismissal. For partners/contractors breaches can include termination of relation including contractual & partnership agreement.

2. Principles

The Child Safeguarding Policy is guided by the principles of:

- *Personal responsibility.* All staff of the CBSS Secretariat must demonstrate high standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond to any concerns of the policy.
- *Accountability to children and their communities.* Through internal systems, standards and practice the CBSS Secretariat will be accountable to the people we aim to serve.
- *Children participation and non-discrimination.* Children should be empowered to understand their rights and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern.
- *The Best Interest of any children involved.* When dealing with a Child Safeguarding concern, the CBSS Secretariat will strive to ensure children's safety, health, and well-being, always placing the best interests of the child at the centre.
- *Confidentiality.* All Child Safeguarding concerns/reports/ investigations will be dealt with on a need-to-know basis and all records will be held securely.
- *Timeliness.* Given the potential for increased or repeated abuse, timely responses are essential on reporting and responding to concerns.
- *Partnership.* The CBSS Secretariat will work together with other agencies and partners to promote Child Safeguarding within organisations and Child Protection in the community.

3. Definitions

- *Child* is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- *Child Safeguarding* refers to the set of policies, procedures and practice that CBSS Secretariat have in place to protect children from harm. CBSS Secretariat has a zero tolerance to harmful behaviour against children and pursues policies to prevent and respond to these issues. We aim to ensure that everyone associated with the organisation is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of violence, abuse, exploitation, injury and any other harm against children.

4. Taking action

At the CBSS, we are fully committed to safeguarding children, and to take all suspicions of abuse seriously, including technology-facilitated (online) child sexual violence. It is important that all suspicions are reported.

Do this if you have a concern, suspicion, or witness abuse:

- Take concerns seriously.
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of concerns.
- Support the child, staff or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns.
- Act appropriately and effectively and co-operate in the process of investigation.

- Be guided through all processes by the principle of the best interest of the child.
- Listen to and take seriously the views and wishes of the child.
- Work in partnership with colleagues, parents/carers and professionals to ensure the protection of the child.
- **Report** (See “Reporting” below).

DON'T:

- Investigate or ask suggestive or leading questions if seeking clarification from the child. This may traumatise the child, corrupt evidence and may lead to that the child is being discredited as a witness.
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Make inappropriate promises, including telling the child that the information they share will be kept a secret.

4. Reporting

At the CBSS, we are fully committed to taking all suspicions of abuse seriously, including technology-facilitated (online) child sexual violence, and **to report all concerns and suspicions**. Remember that the abuse may be ongoing, and that immediate measures must be taken to protect the child.

It is not the responsibility of the CBSS Secretariat to investigate child abuse. It is, however, an **obligation for everyone that this policy applies to** (see “This Policy applies to”, above), **to report concerns, suspicions of inappropriate behaviour or incidents**.

If a person who works for, or on behalf of, the CBSS Secretariat is concerned about the possible abuse of a child, including concerns that relate to the behaviour of a person working for, or on behalf of, the CBSS Secretariat, it must be reported.

Suspicions are to be reported to the police or relevant local authority without undue delay - and to the Director General of the CBSS Secretariat and/or the Designated Safeguarding Officer of the CBSS Secretariat.

Reporting to the CBSS

Director General: Mr Gustav Lindström, +46 730 244 109, gustav.lindstrom@cbss.org
 Designated Safeguarding Officer: Ms Olivia Lind Haldorsson, +46 730 564592,
Olivia.lind.haldorsson@cbss.org

Reporting to authorities

In case of ongoing crime or an emergency: Call 112

Police: 114 14 or go into a police station to report

Social Services:

In Sweden: Contact the Social Services (Socialtjänsten) in the municipality where the child lives. This site provides an overview of contact details for all municipalities in Sweden.
<https://skr.se/tjanster/kommunerlandsting/adressuppgifterkommuner.1246.html>

Abroad: Consult with the Designated Safeguarding Officer

The information should include as far as possible:

- The name & contact of the person who has given the report.
- The child's details.
- The alleged perpetrators details (where identified).
- Details of the concern – please note that you should not investigate or ask suggestive or leading questions if seeking clarification.
- Whether the child is currently safe and his/her current location.
- Whether emergency medical intervention is necessary.
- Who else knows of the potential abuse.
- What actions have been taken to date.
- The name, position and location of the person receiving the referral.

Reporting technology-facilitated (online) Child Sexual Violence

Online child sexual violence is a severe crime, that may have severe impact on children.

If you receive suspected child abuse images or inappropriate images or depictions of children to your CBSS email and/or CBSS phone number, please:

- Contact the police at 114 14 or go into a police station to report.
- Do not delete the message until you have spoken to the police and asked for their advice.
- Do not share, forward or download the images out of respect for the children, but also since you may be committing a criminal act.
- Please contact the CBSS Designated Child Safeguarding officer and in brief inform about what has occurred. **Do not forward or share messages or images**. The CBSS Designated Child Safeguarding officer will write a brief report that will be stored in a safe location, so that we have an account about the incident and our action. the CBSS Designated Child Safeguarding officer will also liaise with senior management and discuss whether further action is needed.

The police will decide whether an investigation will be opened, and if further action is needed from you or the CBSS. It is not the CBSS role to investigate abuse or examine the material.

The first three steps are also relevant if you receive messages to your private number(s) or email(s).

If you **come across suspected child abuse images online**, you can inform the police via an online questionnaire [here](#) (in Swedish – use your browser to translate). You can also report to the ECPAT hotline: <https://ecpat.se/hotline/hotline-eng/> (English) but remember that you regardless should inform the police.

Remember that the abuse may be ongoing, so it is crucial to report!

5. Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

CBSS staff, partners, and other representatives that this policy applies to (see “This Policy applies to”, above) must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally.
- Develop relationships with children which could be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice which is inappropriate or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favour to some children to the exclusion of others.
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others in a manner which could be interpreted as inappropriate.
- Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence.
- Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.
- Take photos, audio or audio-visually record or otherwise depict children without their and their caregivers’ explicit consent.
- Collect, store or disseminate data about individual children.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Staff, partners, and other representatives should avoid actions or behaviour, which may allow behaviour to be misrepresented, or that constitutes poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

6. Review

The CBSS monitors and reviews the safeguarding policy and measures regularly.

This policy was reviewed and updated in **Stockholm on 10 October 2024**.

Changes and updates may happen regularly and will be communicated to all CBSS staff. It is the responsibility of all staff to inform partners, consultants and other external actors that are associated with the CBSS and that the policy applies to (“This Policy applies to”, above) of the updated strategy.

The next scheduled review will take place in 2025.

Annexes

Annex 1. CBSS Guidance on photos of children

Annex 2. Guidance on child participation

Annex II. CBSS Strategy 2020-25