



Child Safety and Protection Policy for Childhood Roads Institute

Policy Statement

Childhood Roads Institute's child protection policy strives to protect children and young people. It is steadfast in its devotion to protecting children and young people at risk and ensuring that they can experience quality care and nurturing relationships. **Childhood Roads Institute** has put in place guidelines for protecting children in all aspects related to the Children's Act that impact the nature of work of Childhood Roads Institute's Board, Staff, interns and volunteers of the organisation to ensure the wellbeing of children impacted by their work. The policy and related procedures should always be in line with any South African legislation pertaining to the SA Children's Act.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Policy review two-yearly.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For the purposes of this Child Protection Policy, all references to:

- ‘*child*’, ‘*children*’, ‘*young person*’, ‘*young people*’, ‘*adolescent*’ and ‘*adolescents*’ – whether singular or plural – are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to those under the age of 18 years, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Children’s Act (no 38 of 2005).
- ‘Workers’, ‘staff’, ‘volunteers’, are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to anyone interacting with children on behalf of **CRI**

AIM

- a) The purpose of the policy is to inform and guide Board Members, Management, Staff, Partners and members of the public associated with on the promotion of children’s safety, protection, well-being and prevention of harm in all programmes and projects with children and their families.

CRI believes that:

1. Child protection is both an individual and Organisation’s responsibility.
2. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation and inequalities should be challenged.
3. All children should be encouraged to fulfill their potential.
4. The welfare of children is paramount.
5. Everyone must take precautions and responsibility to help create a safe place for children and support their care and protection. This begins with everyone being well informed and aware of child protection issues.
6. Openness must be encouraged about concerns relating to child protection matters because child abuse thrives on secrecy.

7. Organisations and networks owe a duty of care to the children with whom they work and a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children in their care.
8. “The best interest of the child” is of paramount importance and will be prioritised in all matters related to child protection.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

- a) The best interests of the child are put first.
- b) Respect: every human being - adult and child - has worth and must be respected. Respect is a right for oneself, for others and for property and places that have been made open for children to use.
- c) Equality and non-discrimination: these apply to all children across race, culture, beliefs, geography, class, socio-economic circumstances, age, gender, sexual orientation, language and ability – but for equity, children with special needs must have these needs addressed accordingly.
- d) Privacy: the right to privacy and confidentiality applies to children and adults.
- e) Protection: should be given according to age and capacity.

All activities must be organised to ensure the utmost safety and security of children and take into cognisance the venue or environment that could result in physical injuries especially from traffic accidents, lifts, stair-wells, toilets, upstairs windows, fire-escapes, balconies, swimming pools/streams. Dangerous play-things such as those containing lead and items hard enough to cause injury eg bats, balls.

- f) Children's right to participation is upheld and children meaningfully contribute towards, and negotiate, decisions being made about their lives.
- g) Fun and relaxation: Children of all ages including young people have a right to enjoy the activities planned and also to have time for fun and relaxation.
- h) Responsibility: Adults involved in the programme have final responsibility for children. Children are invited and encouraged to begin sharing responsibilities and commitment to other people and the programme.

- i) Discipline: Follow a disciplinary procedure that has been pre-determined when dealing with problem behaviour.
- j) Punishment: no child may be physically punished or verbally abused, shamed or humiliated, nor frightened by any action such as angry shouting or threats. No-one should use force, react in anger, use put-downs, humiliate a child in front of others or reject the child – but make it clear if the behaviour or language is not acceptable.
- k) Sexual and romantic relations between adults and child participants (even if considered consensual) are not allowed in any form or under any circumstances.
- l) Physical contact: Unnecessary physical contact with children should be avoided. Do not engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay. Do not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form. When a child needs individual attention, it is better that the adult with them is of the same gender. Sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke are forbidden.
- m) No smoking in public spaces (as pertaining to South Africa's laws) and while on duty working with children.
- n) No alcohol consumption or taking of illegal substances while on duty at a CRI activity, including when responsible for children overnight.

6. APPLICATION OF SAFETY POLICY AND GUIDELINES:

- a) Children visiting CRI offices for various reasons: for example to consult for advice or assistance; to visit a staff member; to do research; or when they volunteer for work in office or in our projects.
- b) At day or half-day workshops with children and adult partners in office venue or another venue.
- c) At overnight workshops with children and their accompanying adults

- d) At conferences where children are participating and CRI is responsible for overseeing the safety, protection and wellbeing of children.
- e) At consultations and work with children in their home environment
- f) Travelling with children to and from activities and transporting children while on a CRI activity , to or from an event, in staff members own vehicles or any public form of transport
- g) Perpetrators could include:
 - adults in leadership or support team who abuse children
 - children harming other children (including bullying and teasing)
 - service staff who access the group environment and abuse children
 - outsiders gaining access to group and abusing or interfering with children.
- h) There is a legal obligation to report to the police and social workers any disclosure of sexual offences.

7. CRI SAFETY AND PROTECTION POLICY PRINCIPLES

A. Listening to children:

- a) As advocates for children, recognise the importance of ensuring the voices of children are heard and taken into account.
- b) Seek the views of children through formal processes of consultation as well as through informal meetings, discussions and interviews.
- c) Include them as far as it is to their benefit in all implementation and review processes for this policy.

B. Providing a safe environment and safe activities:

- a) Recognise the importance of careful planning to ensure activities and events organised are safe for children.
- b) Developed procedures including a safety checklist and appoint a designated person to coordinate child safety for each event.
- c) Recognise CRI obligation to ensure provision for a safe environment for all staff and visitors to office, especially children.
- d) Training is provided on safety issues and all staff members are actively encouraged to identify any potential hazards to children and to take action to control any risks.

Valuing diversity:

- a) Value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.
- b) Staff members are provided with opportunities to engage in cultural and diversity awareness and human rights training.
- c) Cultural practices are respected unless they are contrary to human rights.

Protecting privacy and confidentiality:

- a) As a core component of protecting children, considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of information provided to CRI about particular children and their families, through honouring and respecting its sensitive and personal nature.
- b) Have a privacy policy and procedures regarding the collection, use and storage of information and images.

E. Recognising the critical role of leadership

- a) Apply the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff.
- b) All prospective staff are required to undergo safety screening in accordance with a detailed safety screening policy.
- c) Seek to attract and retain the best staff.
- d) Provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated.
- e) Develop a Code of Conduct to provide guidance for staff.
- f) Act on any grievances about the conduct of staff: the CRI Mancom will listen to and act on any concerns that children, or their parents, guardians or carers or others may raise with us about the conduct of our staff in their interactions with children.

F. Consultation and collaboration

Seek to influence by listening, consulting and collaborating while always maintaining independence.

Quality and accountability

Encourage reflection and learning; a commitment to research; and an aspiration to excellence. Have extensive monitoring and evaluation processes in place, both internal and external.

Integrity and impartiality

Act with integrity and impartiality at all times, without fear or favour.

8. PROTOCOLS FOR CHILD SAFETY AS THE CRI OFFICE

A. Office procedures and responsibilities

- a) Safe play area for children is clearly demarcated.
- b) One person is appointed to oversee office safety and protection procedures.
- c) There must be an up to date emergency first aid kit available in the office and at least 2 trained first-aiders.
- d) Emergency contact details should be posted at each telephone in the offices.
- e) Useful referrals - contact details should be posted at each telephone in the offices.
- f) All documents & electronic versions that contain personal information about children such as names and addresses must be treated as confidential and filed in secure cupboards or cabinets where unauthorised persons cannot access them.
- g) All photographs and videos of children are confidential and may not be shared or published outside the organisation except with the permission of both children and their parents or guardians, and following the principles of children's rights.

9. PROTOCOLS FOR CRI EVENTS THAT INCLUDE CHILDREN

A. Provision of activity information to participants:

- a) CRI safety policy for events should be included with registration forms to inform parents, guardians, caregivers, children and all participating in programme about CRI safety and protection commitments and are entitled to know what safety and protection plans are in place for the care of their children.
- b) Parents, guardians and children must be given clear information about the activity and who will be responsible for them, the organizers and their contact numbers.

B. Participant registration and consent forms

(See Appendix for examples)

All participants must fill in a registration form before participating in a CRI activity.

There are several parts to this:

Registration form:

- a) To be able to help a child in an emergency and to rapidly contact guardians and relevant people it is necessary to have particular information about child participants at the activity.
- b) A duplicate set of registration forms must be made or a master list with details drawn up. One is for **office reference** and the other for the **activity leader on site**.
- c) Information about children must be kept secure and private.
- d) Health information must be passed on to the relevant person to support the child's needs.
- e) Even for short events a registration and consent procedure should be followed.

Part of the consent form is an indemnity clause:

- a) for a claim by a parent against any financial loss to that parent due to accidental injury, theft of personal belongings etc.
- b) CRI must ensure that this complies with legal requirements - See sample form in Appendix

Child code of conduct:

- a) Must be signed and agreed to by the child participant before attending the activity-Rules & Regulations & understanding of travel conduct.
- b) Further debate with children on this code of conduct can be developed at the activity.
- c) See sample form in Appendix.

Photo and information sharing consent form:

- a) Must be signed by child, parents or guardians.
- b) They must give informed consent, that is, they must know what and why they are signing and what the effects might be.
- c) See sample form in Appendix.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- a) Implementing a safety and protection policy and ethical practice standards depends on duty bearers who are committed to this, and know their role and responsibilities.
- b) Orientation on the CRI Safety and Protection Policy must be given to all staff members and partners engaged with CRI programmes and they should sign the Code of Conduct and make a commitment to uphold the Policy.

- c) CRI management must ensure that there is a committed leadership team with the knowledge, skills and values that are essential for its effective implementation.

Leadership team components:

- a) Designated Person/s' to coordinate safety and protection and take responsibility for implementing the safety and protection policy responsibilities at every programme activity involving children under the auspices or in partnership with CRI and practice standards of the organisation.
- b) This person is accountable to the Director and the supporting adult leadership team. Decisions are made in consultation with them.
- c) Grievances and problems regarding safety and protection can be reported to this designated person.
- d) Should leaders at a children's event neglect their duties resulting in disorderly behaviour such as lack of provision for children's needs, children not sleeping at night, unsupervised activities, using unlicensed drivers, or allowing drivers to drink and drive, disciplinary action will be taken by Director & Management of CRI.
- e) Children must know that they have a right to protection and good care and non-interference from others.
- f) The "Designated Person" must be available to hear about any incidents or worries that participants may have and needs to be empathetic with children and have skills to be responsive.

Adults and children as leaders and partners

- a) Child groups attending an CRI activity must be accompanied by an adult partner, from the organisation the children are involved in, to support them during the entire event.
- b) The adult partner and children designated as leaders must be part of the leadership team that ensures positive discipline (especially with their own children) and the children's safety and security.
- c) These leaders might also have other roles in developing and implementing the programme. Additional programme leaders could also make up the leadership team and provide support to ensure that safety and protection plans are carried out.
- d) Child leaders are able to implement safety and protection responsibilities but must be in a supportive relationship with an adult who has overall responsibility for safety and protection.

Registration of team members

- a) Team members need to know their role is and need to sign and agree to the Code of Conduct Roles of adult participants must be outlined in a job, task or role description, and agreed upon.
- b) Team members should fill in a registration form that provides relevant personal information.
- c) At all CRI activities, accompanying adults must be actively involved with the programme over the whole time period.
- d) If they are representing an organisation, there must be approval of attendance by the leader of that organisation OR separate references from another source regarding their suitability for working with children.
- e) In principle the child protection register should be checked, but if a name is not there, this is not in itself a guarantee of a person's integrity with children. The references of unknown people must be thoroughly checked.
- f) Child leaders must fill in child registration and indemnity forms and sign the adult code of conduct.

Other adults involved in servicing the activity :

- a) If possible prior conversation needs to be held with outside management about the standards of child safety that CRI upholds and how the general staff should co-operate.
- b) These might be caterers, drivers, service people, cleaners, security guards or other adults at the venue in a child participation activity. Most often it will not be within our scope to check references and insist on a Code of Conduct.
- c) Children need to know that CRI activity leaders will not tolerate harassment or abuse of children by anyone and that at any moment they can report incidences to the designated person or any activity leader.

Ratio of adults to children

- a) Effective care of children and implementation of safety and protection policy depends on adequate number of responsible duty bearers actively present at the activity.
- b) Adult numbers should take into account the need to avoid mixing children below age of 11 years with older teenagers, as their needs are very different.
- c) We recommend an upper age limit of 16 years.
- d) Older children could be part of leadership team and subject to an adult code of conduct.

The following ratio is recommended as a minimum. There should be proportional gender representation in the leadership team:

Day programmes and outings

Ages Ratio :

3 years and under- 1 adult to 2 children

4-7years - 1 adult to 6 children

7-12years- 2 adults to 20 children

12-17years- 2 adults to 20 children

Overnight and travelling events

Ages Ratio

7-12 years- 1 adult to 5 children

12-17years- 1 adult to 7 children

It is not recommended to take children under 7 years of age on overnight participation events unless their own parent or caregiver takes responsibility and accompanies them.

**Annex 1:
CHILD PROTECTION FORM**

TO BE COMPLETED BY EACH PERSON WANTING TO INTERACT WITH OR FOR CHILDREN WITH OR FOR **CRI**.

I [name] have read and understood **CRI's** Child Protection Policy and I promise to abide by it and the procedures mentioned in the policy.

I hereby declare that I have never been accused of, or found guilty of, any form of child abuse or pedophilia in the past or present, and to my knowledge my name does not appear in the National Child Protection Register, Part B or the National Register for Sex Offenders.

I agree to apply for clearance in the National Child Protection Register and National Register for Sex Offenders when requested by **CRI**.

I commit myself to protect all children, both boys and girls, from physical, sexual and emotional abuse. I commit myself to report discreetly, so as not to present further opportunity for abuse, any suspicious activity or inappropriate behaviour noted towards children as according to the procedures set out in this policy.

I further commit to maintaining confidentiality, as set out in the policy, in all child protection issues. I will not divulge any information about a child or suspected perpetrator to anyone unless it is according to **CRI's** reporting procedure.

I am aware that if found guilty of any form of child abuse or disclosure of confidential information, as described in this policy, I will be disciplined according to the **CRI** Disciplinary Code, furthermore I understand that legal action either in South Africa or abroad may be taken against me.

Date: _____ Place: _____

Signature: _____

Annex 2: REPORTING CHILDABUSE FORM

DETAILS OF PERSON REPORTING INCIDENT

Your name:

Your address:

Your age:

Your email address or contact details:

Your role in, or relationship with **CRI**:

Your relationship with the child or young person:

CHILD'S DETAILS

Child's name:

Child's address:

Child's date of birth:

Who does the child live with? Please give name(s) and nature of relationship with the child:

Is the child male or female?

DETAILS OF THE CONCERN/ABUSE

Nature of concern(s) / allegation(s):

Details of how you came to have a concern / allegation: