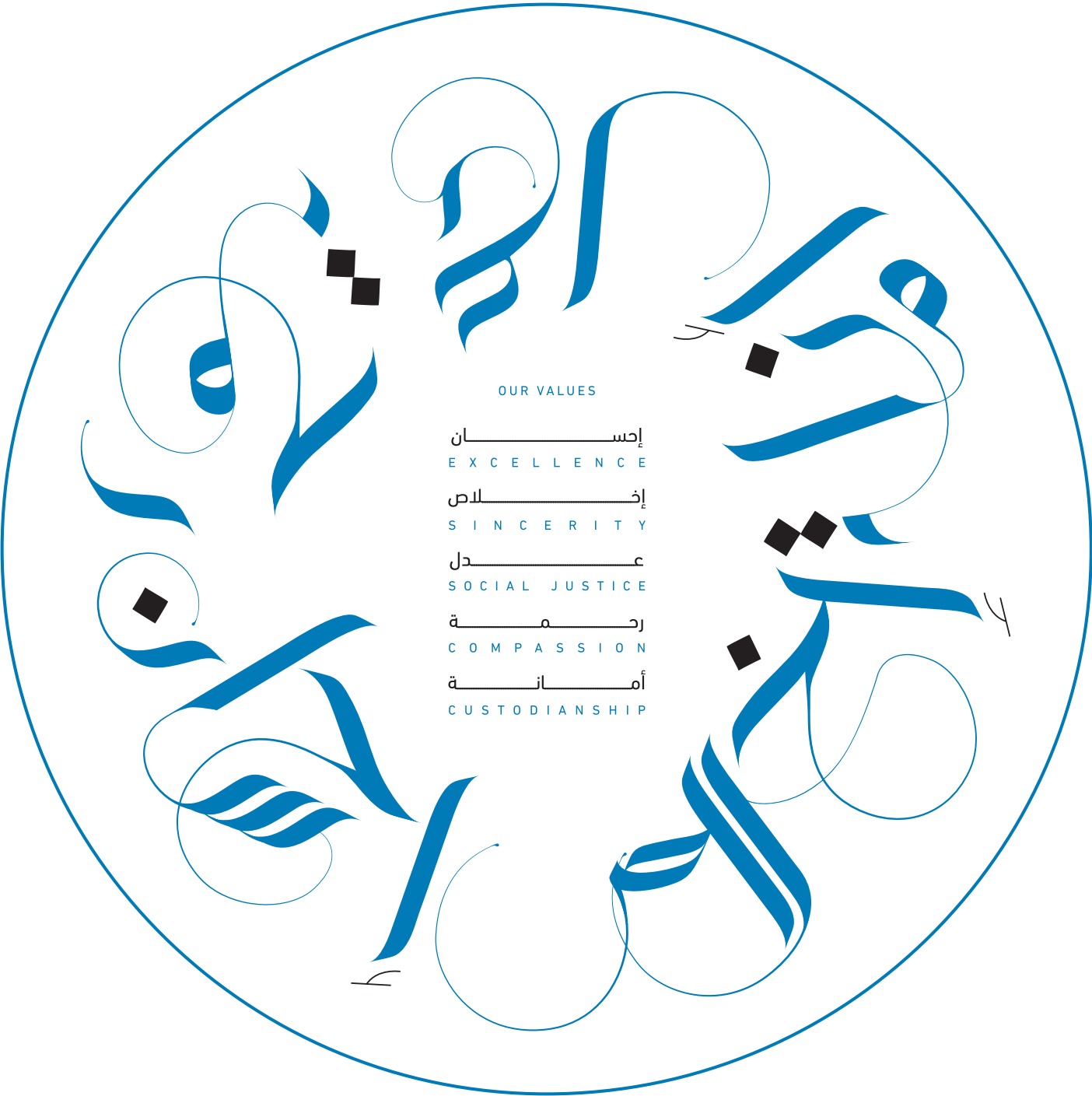


# Child Protection Policy





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# Table of Contents

1. Introduction ..... 7

2. Context ..... 8

I. Who does the Child Protection Policy apply to?

II. Why does Islamic Relief need a Child Protection Policy?

III. Child Protection within Islam

3. Defining child abuse ..... 11

Universal categories of child abuse .....

Cirumstances under which staff might suspect child abuse .....

4. Islamic Relief’s Child Protection Policy - Core statement ..... 13

5. Islamic Relief’s commitment to Child Protection ..... 14

Organisation and field offices responsibilities .....

Child Protection responsibilities for partners funded or supported by Islamic Relief .....

6. Staff behaviour ..... 16

Abuse by other children .....

7. Communications about children ..... 18

8. Designated roles and responsibilties ..... 20

9. Responding to child abuse concerns ..... 21

General procedures to be followed in all cases .....

Guidance on dealing with a child’s allegation or suspicion of abuse .....

When suspicion falls on a staff member of Islamic Relief .....

Co-operating with Child Protection inquiries and administrative investigations .....

Dealing with unsuitable staff .....

10. Stadard complaints flowchart ..... 27

11. IRW Complaints referral form ..... 28

12. IRW Child Protection statement for staff ..... 30

13. IRW consent form for the use of communication on children ..... 31

14. Terms of reference for Child Protection focal points ..... 32

15. Islamic Guidance: Safeguarding behaviour ..... 34

## 1. Definitions

**Child abuse:** Child abuse includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 1999 & 2002).

**Child grooming:** Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Children can be groomed online (through social media or online platforms) or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know (NSPCC, 2016).

**Child Protection (CP) Focal Point:** In order to implement the Child Protection Policy (CPP), Islamic Relief has designated Child Protection Focal Points globally (at IRW) and locally (IR field offices). These focal points are responsible for supporting management in implementing the Child Protection Policy, as well as receiving and managing concerns and complaints in accordance with the CPP.

**Child protection:** Child protection is the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children (and refers to a subset of children’s rights). It also describes the work being undertaken to strengthen laws, policies and systems that are designed to protect children (CPWG, KCS).

**Child safeguarding:** Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes cause no harm to children. Organisations ensure that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse and that any concerns about children’s safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities (KCS, 2014).

**Child:** A child is every human being below the age of 18 (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

**Code of Conduct (or code of behaviour):** A Code of Conduct/behaviour is an agreement on rules of behaviour for a group or organisation; Islamic Relief has its own internal Code of Conduct that applies to all staff members. In addition, they are bonded by the code of behaviour relating to children, which is outlined in this policy.

**Islamic Relief (IR) or Islamic Relief family:** A collective reference to all IR operations in various countries that operate under the licence agreement and logo of Islamic Relief. This includes those focusing on programme implementation (field offices) or fundraising (IR partner offices), as well as the international office.

**Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW):** IRW refers to the international office in Birmingham.

**Online abuse:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

**Safeguarding or Child Protection Policy (CPP):** Safeguarding/CPP describes the organisation’s commitment to preventing and responding appropriately to harm to children.







# 1.

## Introduction

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For Islamic Relief (IR), there is no greater priority than ensuring our work has the greatest positive impact on the people we serve. Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a caring world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled and people respond as one to the suffering of others. Children are the heart of every community, and have been at the core of Islamic Relief's work over the past 30 years. In working with vulnerable children around the world, Islamic Relief takes seriously its responsibility to uphold the protection of children, uphold children's rights and promote Islamic teachings to provide safeguards from harm.

Islamic Relief's Child Protection Policy (CPP) aims to address child protection through a number of ways. This document provides an introduction to an Islamic framework for the protection of children, highlights the methods through which children are protected against abuse, and provides staff with the tools to deal with issues of child protection. This policy states IR's commitment to protecting children (Section A), and outlines a set of processes and procedures that the organisation and all associated staff and members have to put in place in order to comply with this commitment (Section B). The Annexes provide useful safeguarding templates and additional Islamic guidance (Section C). Specifically, these policy guidelines aim to address four aspects of child protection by ensuring:

- » Islamic Relief Worldwide and its field offices have up to date child protection policies that incorporate the principles and main procedures of the Islamic Relief policy document
- » A code of behaviour for staff and volunteers is maintained and staff are aware of them
- » There are adequate recruitment processes and ongoing training and induction on child protection issues
- » A clear complaints and response mechanism is implemented through a set of procedures that ensure complaints and concerns related to child protection are dealt with effectively and professionally



## 2. Context

**For the purpose of this policy, Islamic Relief regards children as those under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all children with whom Islamic Relief has contact with, regardless of age, gender, ability, religion, ethnicity, class or other form of social identity.**

This policy forms part of a wider framework for the general protection of those who are vulnerable, and provides guidance for appropriate behaviour with beneficiaries, whether they are children, men or women. Islamic Relief has established complaints, whistle blowing, employment, health and safety, orphan sponsorship programmes and disaster response policies that also help ensure the safety of children, which, thereby, complement this policy.

**Important note: The following guidelines conform to UK law, international standards and good practices in achieving child protection requirements.**

## I. Who does the Child Protection Policy apply to?

This document sets out Islamic Relief's Child Protection Policy (CPP). The CPP applies to all staff working in the Islamic Relief family of organisations, and form the basis for our procedures in implementing any programme involving children. Although local laws and regulations may vary with regard to child protection, we expect this document to form the basic content and structure of Islamic Relief's field offices' Child Protection Policy, whilst still integrating local legal obligations. IR puts equal emphasis on the commitment to upholding high standards of child protection in both humanitarian and development contexts. Therefore, this policy covers all of IR's programmes and applies equally across all operational contexts.

As a corporate document and IR's mandate to children, the policy applies to all IR staff and representatives as part of their contractual obligations to the Islamic Relief family of organisations. It also applies to IR trustees, volunteers who work with Islamic Relief or in Islamic Relief's name, as well as any IR partner, implementing partner, contractor, donor or guest when visiting IR field offices.

This document is not intended as sector strategy, and does not aim to provide guidance on addressing concerns of abuse that happen within the community that would require a programmatic response (although it provides a reference point for action). Therefore, the communities IR works in are not bound by this policy.

## II. Why does Islamic Relief need a Child Protection Policy?

Islamic Relief's Code of Conduct and values statement sets out our commitment to fulfil the rights and respect the dignity of each person, including those children and young people we work with. Children, according to Islam, are entitled to various rights. In the first instance the right to be properly brought up, raised and educated. Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) said: "Every one of you (people) is a shepherd. And every one is responsible for whatever falls under their responsibility. A man is like a shepherd of his own family, and he is responsible for them." It is, therefore, our responsibility to ensure that those who fall under our care are given the knowledge and tools to make the distinction between right and wrong, and between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

In order to fulfil this commitment, we have developed this document that, if acted upon, will safeguard the children we have a responsibility toward, and those staff that may have to deal with protecting children from abuse.

Islamic Relief recognises that child abuse happens in all societies, cultures and organisations, and that IR staff are, therefore, likely to face concerns of abuse. As a humanitarian agency, it is important to ensure that every effort is made to guarantee that our programmes prevent child abuse, protect children and make it explicit and visible that our work and activities promote the safety and security of children.

Research shows<sup>2</sup> that children are increasingly vulnerable during emergencies, and IR is committed to upholding equally high standards to protect them in both emergencies and other programmes. Emergencies impact children by:

1. Undermining existing protection mechanisms like the family, local community, legal system, social services and social norms
2. Exacerbating existing child protection threats like child labour, exploitation, trafficking, violence in educational settings and restricting access to justice
3. Presenting new risks and threats to children like family separation, recruitment into armed forces, psychosocial distress, violence and abuse, and often reducing access to education and development opportunities

<sup>1</sup>Hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

<sup>2</sup> A matter of life and death, CPWG. 2015.

Lessons learnt have shown that organisations do not prioritise the implementation of internal child protection policies, although abuse is likely to occur every time an emergency happens.

IR, therefore, recognises the need for strict child protection policies and procedures, and to ensure that they are implemented throughout IR's humanitarian responses, safeguarding children in all areas of our work. This includes ascertaining that adequate measures are put in place for localised recruitment and partnerships in emergency contexts. Specific guidance is also outlined in IR's Disaster Response Handbook.

Donors, local partners and the public, particularly those applying for paid or voluntary positions, should be made aware of Islamic Relief's Child Protection Policy when they request information about our work.

Islamic Relief and its partner organisations overseas are accountable to our beneficiaries and donors to ensure that our child protection standards are maintained within every programme we support. This document addresses this requirement and provides safeguards in this regard.







### III. Child Protection within Islam

**“They (the true believers) give food, out of love for Allah, to the poor, the orphan and the slave, saying: We feed you only for Allah’s pleasure – we desire from you neither reward nor thanks.” (Quran 76:8 – 9).**

Islam provides extra measures to protect vulnerable individuals. Human beings, in particular those who may be weak and vulnerable, like the elderly, women, people living with disabilities and children, are a special creation of Allah and are to be honoured and protected from any kind of abuse.

Allah (SWT) says:

**“Indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam (PBUH),” (Qur’an 17:70).**

Under no circumstance should a human being, even as a child, be dishonoured let alone be abused.

Islam views anything under one’s authority as an amanah (trust). As a custodian of this trust, it is our duty to fulfil this custodianship according to the best of our ability, through protecting the faith, life, mind, honour and dignity, as well as material possessions, of every child and adult under our custodianship. One of the higher objectives of Islam is to protect, preserve and honour human life. In fact, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

**“Every one of you is a Protector and Guardian for those who are placed under your care.” The custodianship (amanah) is further emphasised with the command of not betraying the trust. Allah (SWT) says: “Betray not knowingly your amanah (things entrusted to you).” (Qur’an 8:27)**

Another important principle in Islam in relation to protection is the prohibition of causing harm and abuse. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

**“There is not to be any causing of harm, nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm” [Ibn Majah].**

This tradition is regarded by Islamic jurists as one of the fundamental ‘Legal Maxims’ in Islamic law. By using this principle, Islamic scholars have categorically prohibited any kind of abuse or harm caused to any fellow human being, in particular to vulnerable individuals and children who are entrusted to someone’s custody and put under their care.

A child is a trust from Allah and, therefore, the utmost should be done to ensure that their needs are catered for and that they are protected from all forms of abuse.

**“Oh You, who believe! Do not betray Allah and His Messenger, and do not knowingly betray your trusts.” [Qu’ran 8:27].**

We do recognise that in Islam or traditional culture the definitions of childhood and maturity vary from the United Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) or even from national legislation. Wherever this is the case IRW recognises the importance of abiding by international obligations and complying with local legal requirements.

<sup>3</sup>Hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim.

## 3. Defining Child Abuse

**Child abuse occurs when adults or older children hurt children or young people (under the age of 18), either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly by failing to act to prevent harm.**

### I. Universal categories of child abuse

These are the universal categories of child abuse and exploitation:

**Physical abuse** – Physical injury to a child, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

**Emotional abuse** – Harm caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, denial of care or bullying, which results in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person. All abuse involves ill-treatment.

**Sexual abuse** – Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in any kind of sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of or consents to what is happening. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, but also includes non-contact activities, such as encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, pornography or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

**Neglect** – persistent failure to meet a child’s basic needs, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and which result in serious impairment of a child’s or young person’s health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, medical care or neglect of a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Exploitation** – Abusing a child’s vulnerability or trust for commercial or sexual purposes.



### II. Circumstances under which staff might suspect child abuse

Staff might be confronted with situations of child abuse as defined above. A child protection concern may come to the notice of a staff member in a number of ways:

- » A child makes a direct allegation
- » A child makes a comment that seems to suggest abuse
- » A child displays obvious signs of physical abuse
- » A child’s behaviour suggests indications of abuse
- » You may simply suspect a child is at risk from another child or adult – these may be grounds to report
- » Something about the behaviour of a staff member suggests s/he is not suitable to work with or care for children
- » A third party (guardians, social workers and partners) reports the abuse

Staff will receive training on how to respond to each of these situations. The designated child protection (CP) Focal Point will be trained to recognise the obvious behavioural or physical signs of abuse.

The Qur’an speaks out against abuse, whether in the form of language, emotion or through actions.

**“Oh You who believe do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set. Do not defame one another. Do not insult by using nicknames. And do not backbite or speak ill of one another.” – Quran 49:11-12**



# SECTION A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

4.

## Islamic Relief's Child Protection Policy – Core Statement

**Islamic Relief believes that all children have a right to personal dignity and protection from abuse, and recognises the special responsibility and duty of care it bears to create a safe environment for children within the projects and programmes it manages and supports. The interest of child safety and protection should be paramount to any other interest that might compromise it.**

**We will achieve this by:**

- » Setting in place and implementing policies and procedures specifically designed to protect children
- » Maintaining a code of behaviour for all IR representatives, including staff, volunteers, IR trustees, IR partners, implementing partners, contractors, donors or guests visiting IR field offices, and making them aware of it
- » Conducting risk assessments of programmes and operations and putting in place strategies to mitigate potential risk of harm to children
- » Regularly monitoring and auditing IR field offices, programmes and projects to ensure standards are observed
- » Ensuring that this Child Protection Policy is observed in IR's recruitment procedures, staff induction and training
- » Ensuring that Islamic Relief's beneficiaries are aware of children's rights and by what means they can report any concerns of abuse
- » Ensuring that any allegations of abuse are investigated and properly dealt with in accordance with IR procedures, victims are supported and perpetrators reported to the relevant authorities, and appropriate sanctions are taken by IR
- » Ensuring that the organisations we fund and work with maintain equivalent standards through the provision of robust service level agreements



## 5. Islamic Relief's commitment to Child Protection

### I. Organisation and field offices responsibilities

It is Islamic Relief's policy to provide a safe and secure environment in which children can thrive and develop, and where all aspects of their welfare are protected. In order to do this, we will take all the necessary measures to mitigate risk of abuse of children by those in a position of trust (such as staff, partners, donors, contractors), and will observe the following code of responsibilities with a zero tolerance policy:



1. Islamic Relief's commitment to child protection will be stated in appropriate corporate documents that will be made available to beneficiaries and on our website and to whoever requests it.
2. Islamic Relief field offices will strive to prevent situations in which the abuse of children might occur and maintain an up-to-date and dynamic Child Protection Policy.
3. Islamic Relief's senior management and senior staff will ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy and have access to a copy, reminding them of its provisions when the need arises.
4. The induction programme for all staff will include an explanation of the policy and all staff will be expected to complete a more detailed briefing session on the policy.
5. The training needs of staff working in positions that involve interaction with children will be assessed, with relevant training provided. Where necessary, this will be compulsory.
6. Security assessments and programme/project planning should take into account our codes of behaviour and Code of Conduct, and any risks pertaining to children.

7. Any child using Islamic Relief's services and anyone acting on behalf of such a child may complain to management about any aspect of the service they receive. There is a simple, confidential and transparent complaints process that allows complainants to appeal to an independent person/agency if they are dissatisfied with the way the complaint is handled.
8. Any child using Islamic Relief's services may disclose to a staff member any abuse they might be suffering elsewhere in their lives, and staff will be vigilant of signs of abuse.
9. Any indication that a child might be suffering from abuse will immediately trigger the Islamic Relief field offices' child protection procedures. These procedures are consistent with local law and good practice.
10. In recruiting staff, paid or voluntary, full-time or part-time, the Islamic Relief field offices will follow a systematic recruitment and selection process designed to assess the applicant's suitability for any position involving contact with children. Extra vigilance will be given to recruitment in the context of IR's humanitarian responses to ensure same standards are upheld, as staff turnover is higher and situations request for quick actions.
11. Checks will be made to ensure that all the information provided by the candidate is accurate and within the limits of existing procedures. Candidates will be investigated to establish whether any offences against children have been committed.



12. As per our Human Resources Policy, no candidate will be appointed to any position at Islamic Relief without two suitable references being provided. For positions where responsibility towards or contact with children is involved, all references must be persons who can comment on relevant and recent aspects of the applicant's work with children.
13. All staff appointments to Islamic Relief field offices are subject to a probationary period, during this time they will receive close supervisory attention.
14. All paid and voluntary staff will have clear roles and responsibilities as set out in a job description, particularly where they come into contact with children.
15. The supervision of staff ensures that the children using the services of Islamic Relief receive adequate and appropriate protection.
16. Where staff members occupy high-risk posts, or are working in high risk situations (dependent on the level of contact with children), the Islamic Relief field office will ensure they receive regular supervision and support meetings.
17. All implementing partners, contractors and service providers who have extended contact with children will be made aware of Islamic Relief's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct as part of their contractual agreement.
18. Islamic Relief will ensure that child protection issues receive continuous attention and will regularly review compliance with these principles. A log of child protection cases and lessons learnt will be regularly updated.

19. Field offices will identify and budget for required resources for the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.
20. IR's beneficiaries, including children and their families, will be made aware of their rights and IR's Child Protection Policy (through awareness sessions outlining IR's responsibilities, sponsorship welcome packs, etc.).

### II. Child Protection responsibilities for partners funded or supported by Islamic Relief

1. Partners that Islamic Relief funds or supports to carry out work involving children must be made aware of their obligation to maintain a child protection policy consistent with Islamic Relief's local and international policy. This will be through contractual agreements.
2. Where relevant, implementing partners should be made aware of this policy and trained to be compliant with it.



## 6. Staff Behaviour Protection from Abuse and Exploitation

"Abandon all harm (ithm), whether committed openly or in secret". (Quran 7:33)

**Islamic Relief's code of behaviour sets the expectations it has of its staff and others to ensure children are protected and prevented from being abused in any way. All Islamic Relief staff are expected to comply with the standards set out in the following code of behaviour:**

- » Managers and senior staff should promote a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals
- » Staff must treat children with respect and recognise their right to privacy
- » Staff must take care to avoid showing favouritism towards particular children
- » Staff must not make racist, suggestive or sexist remarks
- » Staff must plan and organise project activities so that risks are minimised
- » Staff must not spend time alone with children – they must plan activities so that more than one person is present or, at the very least, other people are within sight and hearing
- » As much as possible, staff should ensure that a parent or guardian is present while interacting with the child
- » Staff must not stay overnight in the same room as a child
- » Staff must not do things for children of a personal nature that they are capable of doing for themselves
- » <sup>4</sup>Staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact with children, especially that forbidden or advised against in Islamic teaching

- » Staff must not trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues
- » Staff must ensure that all disciplinary measures/sanctions are non-violent and do not humiliate children
- » Staff must not take images of children which are detrimental or explicit and undermine the child's dignity
- » Staff must not rely on just their good name to protect themselves, and must not put themselves in positions where they could be falsely accused of something
- » Staff must remember that someone else may misinterpret their actions, no matter how well intentioned

In relation to sexual exploitation, Islamic Relief adheres to the core principles of the United Nations Task Force on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises 2002. These apply to implementing projects for children, families and communities, irrespective of whether there is an emergency situation or not:

- » Sexual exploitation and abuse by Islamic Relief staff constitutes as gross misconduct and is, therefore, grounds for termination of employment.
- » Sexual activity between children and Islamic Relief staff is prohibited, regardless of the age of <sup>5</sup>majority or age of consent locally. A mistaken belief about a child's age is not a defence.
- » Any type of relationship, including a sexual relationship, between Islamic Relief staff and children, beneficiaries or family of beneficiaries is strictly prohibited, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics; such relationships would undermine the integrity of IR's work to help vulnerable and excluded children and would be classed as gross misconduct.
- » Where an Islamic Relief staff member develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether in Islamic Relief or not, s/he must report their concerns to the Country Director (CD) and the Global Child Protection Focal Point (see chapter 8 for an explanation of this role).

Islamic Relief will seek to report to the relevant authorities any staff member, volunteer or associate who breaks the law with regard to any aspect of child abuse. Islamic Relief makes a direct link between breaches of the code of behaviour and its disciplinary procedures.



### I. Abuse by other children

- » Staff must ensure they prevent the abuse of younger, weaker children or children with disabilities by older or stronger children capable of bullying and cruel or humiliating initiation rituals.
- » Condemnation of such behaviour will be made clear to children in our literature and disciplinary advice to partner institutions.

<sup>4</sup>See Annexes for more details

<sup>5</sup>The age of majority is the threshold of adulthood, as it is recognised in law. It is the age when a minor legally becomes an adult and is legally fixed. It may not necessarily correspond to actual mental or physical maturity of an individual. Islamic Relief regards children as those under the age of 18, as do most countries.



# 7. Communications about children

Islamic Relief strongly supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which makes the best interests of the child a primary consideration by stating that every child has the right to privacy and protection from all forms of exploitation. Special care will be given in disasters, where we will follow the Code of Conduct of the International Committee of the Red Cross: “In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects”.

Communication materials like photographs, films, case studies and messages are an important element in communicating our work to the general public and other stakeholders, and for raising funds. When collecting such material, we strive to maintain the dignity of everyone with whom we work with. We will not use communication material that is disrespectful or demeaning.

<sup>6</sup>Increasing access to technology, such as the internet and social media, means that there is potential for charity materials featuring particular children to be seen in their communities. Tags on photographs also mean that a child’s location may be easily accessed. The identification of children can have a number of consequences. Those wishing to target particular children can more easily track them down. There are cases where children have been identified by the use of a photograph with personal information, and those children and their families have been subject to abuse.

Social media offers new opportunities for tracking and identifying children. This can occasionally lead to exploitation and abuse both online and offline, including by donors where <sup>7</sup>child sponsorship programmes exist. Children with access to social media can also be exposed to cyber/online bullying (use of digital technology to threaten, tease, upset or humiliate someone else) or online grooming (use of the internet to trick, force or pressure a young person into doing something). When NGOs use social media as a form of engagement with children and youth, it is essential for them to ensure that potential risks created by the platform are mitigated, and that safeguarding standards are maintained<sup>8</sup>.

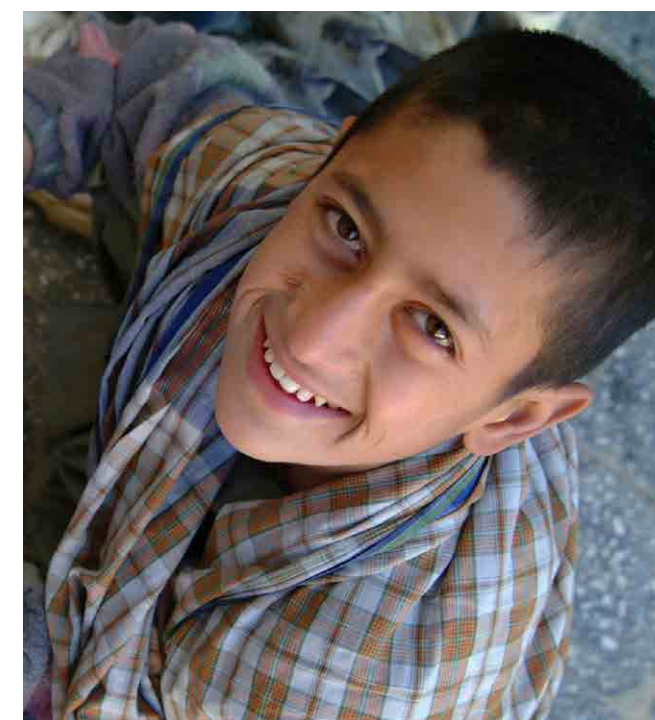
**All Islamic Relief employees, trustees, volunteers,**

**photographers, journalists, implementing partners and contractors, IR Partners, donors and guests will, therefore, follow the below strict guidelines on communication materials featuring children in order to keep them safe:**

- » Put the best interest of the child above other considerations.
- » Always request the subject’s consent to participate and advise them of the likely use of the communication material collected, and reassure them that they are in no way obligated to be part of the project.
- » Consider if the child is comfortable with taking part as they have a right to opt out – subjects will be invited to withhold consent if they do not wish to be involved and their decision will be respected at all times.
- » Obtain images and any other private information for publication purposes in a safe and confidential manner.
- » Gain consent for the gathering of communication materials at the start of a project – do not wait until the material is needed.
- » Always seek permission from the community/ site you are visiting to take media materials and explain its purpose and use (e.g. meeting community leaders or project staff explaining to the community in advance, etc.).
- » Always seek permission when taking photographs or video footage of individual children or small groups.
- » Gain consent when taking and using individual photographs, videos and case studies for publicity, fundraising and awareness-raising (if this is not possible, consent will need to be received from a sample of parents, guardians or from children directly when they are of sufficient age and understanding).
- » The names of children should always be changed to protect their identity, unless the child and his guardian explicitly state a preference to their real name (as long as security implications are not a factor) – never publish a child’s full name, contact or location details or any information that could lead to identifying a child (where names have been changed, state that the name has been changed and withhold the child’s genuine name when passing on the material).
- » Children should have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves and in their own words.
- » Portrayals of children must be accurate and balanced, recognising their right to personal privacy and dignity – do not manipulate the subject in a way that distorts the reality of the situation.
- » Avoid approaches that potentially stereotype or sensationalise people, situations or places.
- » Special consideration will be given to communication material depicting children with disabilities, refugees and those in situations of conflict and disaster to accurately portray context and maintain dignity.
- » Where the risk of harm and stigma is high, take mitigating steps (like concealing faces, using pseudonyms and vague geographical locations, and by non-disclosure of personal information e.g. HIV status).
- » All children must be appropriately dressed according to their country of origin and in countries where children wear fewer items of clothing, be particularly careful about the images taken.
- » Those collecting communication material will not spend time with or have access to children without supervision.
- » Those sent to the field on behalf of IR (IR staff, volunteers, including external photographers and journalists) will be briefed regarding the collection of suitable communication material, and should always be accompanied by a local staff member. External media staff should also carry clear identification at all times.
- » Those sent to the field (including external photographers and journalists) to collect communication material will be asked to undergo a background check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or a national equivalent, if practically possible.
- » Those sent to the field to collect communication material on behalf of IR (with special attention to external photographers, journalists and guests) will be made aware of these guidelines and sign IR’s child protection statement.
- » Personal relationships between staff and beneficiaries are against IR Child Protection Policy and this applies equally to the online world. Therefore, do not engage or be “friends” on social networks with minors who are beneficiaries of IR or those related to IR beneficiaries. If one of them contacts you through these networks, ask the person in charge what you should do.
- » In line with IR Orphan’s Sponsorship Policy, direct contact between the sponsor and the sponsored child, or any of their family members, isn’t allowed and this applies equally to social media. All offline communications should be screened to make

sure that digital information is not shared (Skype names, emails, Facebook details).

- » Digital images and videos (photographs, video, websites, text messages) often capture related information, such as location and coordinates of where the image was taken (geotagging). If such media content are geotagged and posted online, it can become easier for online perpetrators or other ill-intending individuals to locate children and/or their families. Therefore, it is IR’s policy that any media content of children are not geotagged to precise locations in order to protect children and their families.
- » Before initiating specific projects that engage children through social media or technology, make sure you set up clear user policies and safeguarding measures to ensure the safety of the children online.
- » Children, parents and staff should be informed that any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive communication material or behaviour by Islamic Relief should be reported and recorded, following the procedures for reporting child protection concerns, as stated in this document (report to CP Focal Point/Country Director).
- » The Country Director or the Child Protection Focal Point can check any media materials produced in their country prior to being shared or used. IR reserves the right to confiscate any communication material not in line with this Child Protection Policy.



<sup>6</sup>Well over half the people in the developing world have access to cell phones according to the UN. <sup>7</sup>Please refer to IRW’s “Orphan’s Sponsorship Policy” regarding contact between donors and sponsored children. <sup>8</sup>For more information regarding online safety, please refer to “Keeping Children Safe Online” guidance.



## 8. Designated roles and responsibilities

The following designated roles will lead on the implementation and compliance of the IR Child Protection Policy:

- » Islamic Relief has a designated Global Child Protection Focal Point at IRW. S/he is responsible for advising IRW and its field offices on the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and processes, and provides support and advice in dealing with allegations or reports of child abuse.
- » Country directors/heads of mission are ultimately responsible for child protection in their respective areas and for ensuring that local procedures are established in line with IR's Child Protection Policy.
- » Each Islamic Relief field office/mission must identify a country Child Protection Focal Point from their staff. This person will ensure that the CPP is kept up to date and acted upon and will be available for consultation if a child protection concern should arise (see Annexes for Terms of Reference for Child Protection Focal Points).
- » Regional Child Protection Coordinators provide support, advice and guidance to Country Directors and local Child Protection Focal Points on qualitative implementation of the Child Protection Policy in their region. They will refer any child protection concerns directly to the Global Child Protection Focal Point.



## SECTION B PROCEDURES

### 9.

## Responding to Child Abuse Concerns

Child protection is not just about responding to specific allegations or incidents, it is also about the suitability of staff to work with children. The Islamic Relief field office will respond immediately to any concern that a staff member may not be suitable for such work.

Allah (SWT) has given another directive, reminding us that we must do what is right, even if it is against those closest to us.

"Oh you who have faith, stand up firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it is against yourselves or your parents and close family". (Quran 4:135)

All staff have a duty of care to report child protection concerns to the Islamic Relief Country Directors and/or Child Protection Focal Point immediately. Failure to do so could result in a child being harmed.



## General procedures to be followed in all cases

When a child alleges abuse, or a staff member becomes suspicious, write down what the complainant said or the details observed such as marks and behaviour, noting names of people involved, dates, times, places and witnesses using the designated template (see Annexes). This should be done whilst the information is fresh in the staff member's mind. Write down exactly what the complainant says, as an accurate statement of the facts is required, not what you think they meant.

As soon as a child alleges abuse, write down complaint using the designated template (see Annexes).

Report the matter immediately to the Country Director and/or local Child Protection Focal Point, who should report the matter to IRW through the general complaints email: [complaints@irworldwide.org](mailto:complaints@irworldwide.org). Internal Audits will inform the Global Child Protection Focal Point within 24h maximum.

Report immediately to CD and/or local CP Focal Point orally and submit written complaint. CD or CP Focal Point reports to IRW Audit by email through: [complaints@irworldwide.org](mailto:complaints@irworldwide.org)

The Global Child Protection Focal Point will inform the Director of International Programme Division (IPD), Human Resources (HR), Internal Audit and Legal (where appropriate) – ensuring strict confidentiality. Together they will agree on the necessary steps that need to be taken (which could include conducting an internal investigation or reporting the matter to relevant authorities).

IRW CP Focal Point informs IPD, HR, Internal Audit and Legal confidentially

Action completed within 3 days (72h) from the complaint being received

The only exception to this reporting procedure is where the subject of complaint is a senior member of staff who is part of the reporting process, whereupon they should be bypassed in the reporting process immediately (report directly to local CP Focal Point or directly to Global CP Focal Point at IRW as appropriate, who can be contacted at any point).

Bypass process only if person in charge is suspected (report directly to complaints email, local or global CP Focal Point as relevant)

The staff member who receives a direct complaint from a child should let the child speak and only ask questions if they are necessary to clarify whether this is a matter to be reported to the CD/local CP Focal Point. As soon as it becomes clear that the child is alleging abuse, all further questions must be left to trained staff. Where appropriate, a support person for the child should be included in the interview as long as this doesn't cause further risks to the child.

Do not question the child

Further information needed by trained staff

72 hours

Based on the evidence of the country team, with the support of the Global Child Protection Focal Point and relevant IRW directors, the management team will decide on the necessary course of action. This might include reporting to the relevant authorities or carrying out an internal investigation to establish the facts.

Decision on course of action (CD, CP global focal point, IPD director, HR and Legal)

Action completed within 28 days

If abuse is strongly indicated, an immediate safety plan (including medical attention where necessary) will be drawn up for all concerned. This is the responsibility of the Country Directors, the Global Child Protection Focal Point and the Security Manager.

Immediate safety plan if needed

If the child makes a clear allegation about a specific person, untrained staff should not take it upon themselves to question that person.

Do not question suspected staff

Report substantiated suspicion (by internal investigation) to law enforcement authorities. IRW will consider its legal obligation to report those concerns to relevant and competent authorities.

Report to legal authorities where appropriate

This procedure stresses the best interest of the child, taking into account s/he is a possible victim of abuse and should be the focus at all times.

If the staff member making the complaint is not satisfied that appropriate steps have been taken, the matter can be brought up directly with the Global Child Protection Focal Point or Internal Audit.

Closure of the case – IRW CP Focal point, IPD, HR and Internal Audit are informed of outcome.

Upon closure of the case, a final report will be sent to the Global CP Focal Point, who will inform IPD, HR, Internal Audit and Legal where appropriate. Any allegation, suspicion or witnessing of abuse external to IR (against non-IR representatives) follow a different reporting pathway than that stated in this policy. These cases should be referred to relevant authorities (such as social services, partners or local authorities as relevant in the local context), keeping the best interest of the child at heart.



## II. Guidance on dealing with a child's allegation or suspicion of abuse

- » Observation or suspicion of abuse can be suggested by a number of elements, such as noticing that the child has bruises, unusual physical marks or is showing unusual behaviour. These observations may have several different explanations and staff may be unsure whether their concerns are justified. Staff are not expected to be experts in identifying child abuse.
- » When the child makes a direct allegation, let him/her speak and do not question them. The rule is to ask questions only when they are necessary to clarify whether or not the child is alleging abuse. If at any time it becomes clear that the staff member has misunderstood the situation and no allegation is being made, reassess the situation as it may not be appropriate to follow this procedure.
- » If a staff member is concerned, they should try to be clear in their own mind exactly what it is that is causing that concern, and speak with the Child Protection Focal Point or Country Director.
- » Staff should not promise a child that they will keep information secret until they know what the information is. If evidence of abuse or an exploitative relationship exists, staff must disclose it.
- » It may be necessary to ask the child or the parent about a mark or about unusual behaviour. Suspicion is usually aroused more by evasive or unconvincing answers than by the mark or the behaviour itself.
- » If the child seems to be suggesting abuse, but it is not clear, staff should try to find a suitable time and place to talk to the child that will allow them to speak freely.
- » The staff member should listen carefully, remembering that a young child may not have the vocabulary to explain clearly what is causing distress. Make sure another member of staff or a family member is present when talking to the child.
- » Once the matter has been reported, allow time for the child to speak freely.
- » Although staff should always take the child seriously, it should not be assumed everything the child says is factually correct.

## III. When suspicion falls on a staff member of Islamic Relief

- » If an allegation is made about a member of staff or for any other reason suspicion falls on a member of staff, the Islamic Relief field office will liaise with the Global Child Protection Focal Point about referral to the social services department and/or police. The Islamic Relief field office disciplinary procedure also applies here.
- » If an allegation is made about a member of staff or for any other reason suspicion falls on a member of staff, the Islamic Relief field office will follow the advice of the Global Child Protection Focal Point and social services department until all enquiries are complete. It will be necessary to suspend the staff member. This action is intended to safeguard the welfare of children and does not constitute an assumption of guilt. The staff member concerned will require support during this process and should be directed to the relevant sources of advice.
- » When suspicion falls on a staff member, there are three possible outcomes;
  - » It may be satisfactorily proven to the Islamic Relief field office that the staff member is guilty of abusing one or more children
  - » It may be satisfactorily proven to the Islamic Relief field office that the staff member is not guilty of abuse
  - » The enquiry may be inconclusive but lingering suspicion about the staff member's behaviour leads to a loss of trust

The last of these possibilities always raises sensitive issues and it is important that the Islamic Relief field office has a policy in place to deal with this scenario



## IV. Cooperating with child protection enquiries and administrative investigations

- » Child protection enquiries are carried out by the relevant government authorities and the police, usually acting together to see if the law has been broken. Administrative investigations are carried out by trained staff and are internal in nature to understand if codes of conduct, rules and regulations have been breached.
- » Staff are expected to cooperate with enquiries and investigations as far as possible within their respective roles at Islamic Relief. The relevant authority and/or police may not always be clear about the specific role and purpose of the Islamic Relief field office, where this is the case, staff members can and should question any requests that appear inappropriate.
- » If an allegation is made about a member of staff or for any other reason suspicion falls on a member of staff, the Islamic Relief field office will liaise with the Global Child Protection Focal Point about referral to the relevant authorities. The Islamic Relief field office disciplinary procedure also applies here.



## V. Dealing with unsuitable staff

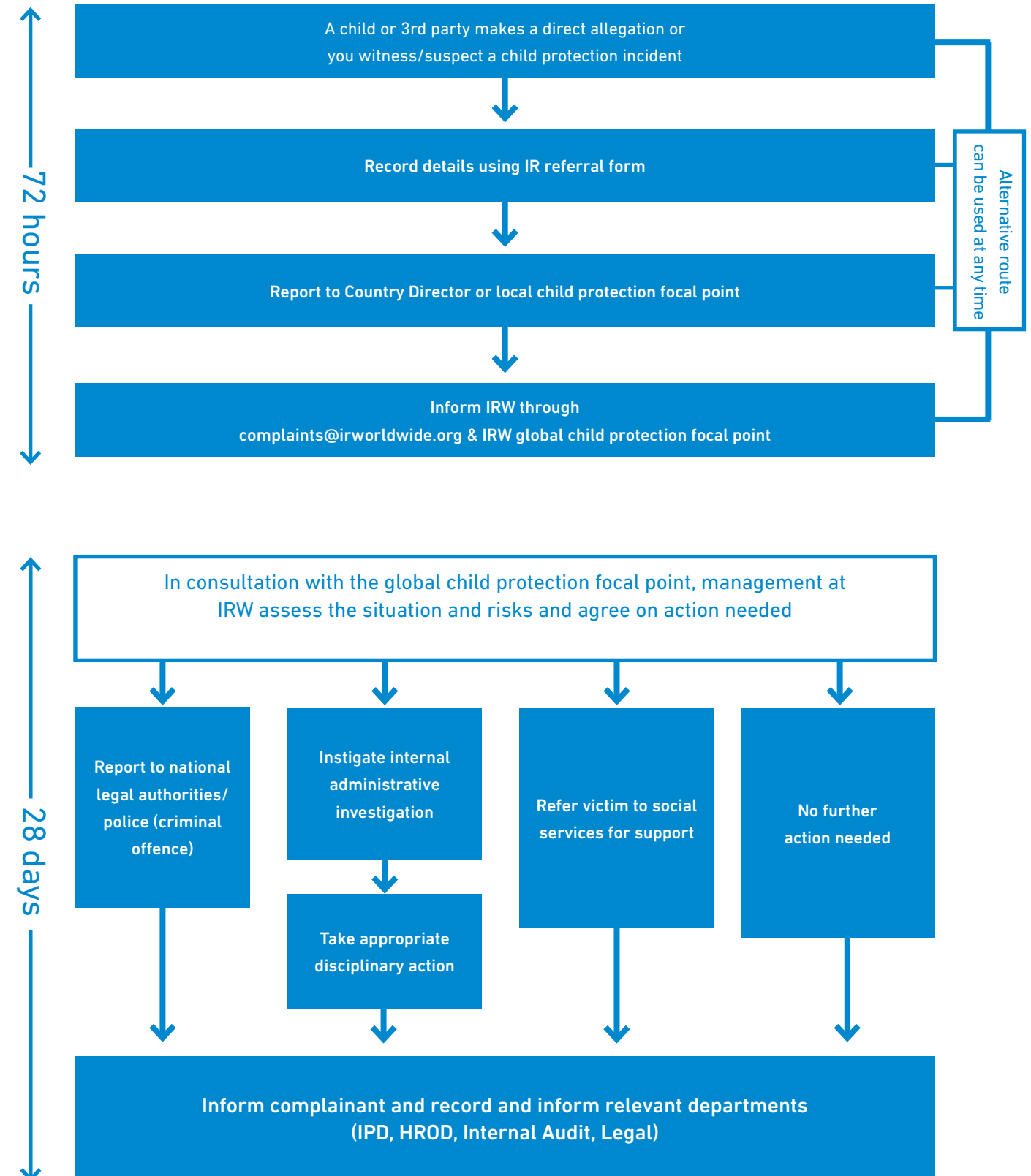
- » Questions regarding the suitability of a staff member to work with children should not be limited to situations in which there is evidence of abuse. Other pointers include failure to respond appropriately to the needs of children, neglecting some children in favour of others and failure to respect parents' wishes. Islamic Relief staff should be clear about the standards of care that are expected and the consequences of failure to meet those standards.
- » If a staff member is felt to be unsuitable to care for children, Islamic Relief should consider whether it is appropriate to discuss their concerns with the social services department or other relevant local authorities.
- » Islamic Relief may decide that a staff member whose behaviour has harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm should no longer carry out childcare duties. In this scenario, Islamic Relief should consider referring the person's name to the relevant authority, which, in the UK, would be the UK Secretary of State for possible inclusion in the Protection of Children Act list or the local equivalent.



# SECTION C ANNEXES

Standard Complaints Flowchart.....	10
Islamic Relief Complaints Referral Form .....	11
Islamic Relief Child Protection Statement for Staff .....	12
Islamic Relief Consent Form for the use of Communication on Children .....	13
Terms of Reference for Child Protection Focal Points .....	14
Islamic Guidance: Safeguarding Behaviour.....	15

## 10. Standard Complaints Flowchart





# 11.

## IRW Complaints Referral Form

Name of complainant:

Ethnic origin/nationality:

Address/contact details:

Age:

Sex:

Relationship with victim:

Identity/Passport number:

---

Name of victim:

Ethnic origin/nationality:

Address/contact details:

Identity/passport number:

Name(s) and address of parents (if under 18):

Age:

Sex:

Has the victim given consent to the completion of this form?

☐ Yes

☐ No

---

Date/time of incident(s):

Location of incident(s) :

Physical/emotional state of victim (describe obvious signs/symptoms):

Witnesses' names/contact information:

Brief description of incident(s) (attach extra pages if necessary):

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Name of the accused person(s):

Job title/organisation of accused person(s) :

Address of accused person(s):

Age:

Sex:

Physical description of accused person:

---

Have the police been contacted by anyone?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what happened?

If no, does the victim want police assistance, if not, why?

Has the victim been informed about available medical treatment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, has the victim sought medical treatment for the incident?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, who provided treatment?

What is the diagnosis and prognosis?

---

What immediate security measures have been undertaken for the victim?

Who is responsible for ensuring the safety plan (name/title/organisation):

---

Any other pertinent information provided in interview (including contact made with other organisations, if any):

Details of referrals and advice on health, psychological, legal needs of victim made by person completing report:

---

Report completed by:

Name/position/organisation:

Date/time/location:

Has the complainant been informed about IR's procedures for dealing with complaints?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Signature/thumb print of the complainant signalling consent for this form to be shared on a 'need to know' basis:

---

Date report forwarded to CD/child protection focal point, IRW:

Date Report received by CD/child protection focal point, IRW:

Name:

Signature:



# 12.

## IRW Child Protection Statement for Staff

### Islamic Relief Worldwide Child Protection Policy Statement:

Islamic Relief believes that all children have a right to personal dignity and protection from abuse and it recognises the special responsibility and duty of care it bears to create a safe environment for children within projects and programmes it manages and supports. The interest of child safety and protection should be paramount to any other interest which might compromise it.

As a corporate document and Islamic Relief Worldwide’s mandate to children, this Child Protection Policy applies to all IR staff and representatives as part of their contractual obligations to the Islamic Relief family of organisations. It also applies to IR trustees, volunteers who work with Islamic Relief or in Islamic Relief’s name, as well as any IR Partner, implementing partner, contractor, donor or guest when visiting IR field offices.

### We ask that all persons declare the following:

- » I have never been convicted of any offence involving any type of harm to children, received a warning or been subject to any administrative measure of investigation for criminal acts or breach of conduct concerning any type of harm to a child or children.
- » I have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in Islamic Relief Worldwide’s Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained in it and accept the importance of implementing child protection policies and practices while working with Islamic Relief Worldwide.
- » I understand that if I withhold any relevant information, or present false or inaccurate information, that I may be subject to the organisation’s Disciplinary Procedures and could be removed from my post, whether paid or voluntary, without notice.

### I have read and understood the above statement:

Full name of employee:

Job title/role:

Signature of employee:

Place: Date:

# 13.

## Islamic Relief Consent Form for the use of Communication on Children

Part A: Consent by a child under 18, with the necessary age, maturity and understanding

### I agree to Islamic Relief Worldwide:

- ☐ Speaking to me and recording my words at \_\_\_\_\_ (choice of venue)
- ☐ Taking my photograph
- ☐ Making a video or any other recording
- ☐ Share my photo with my sponsor

### I agree for Islamic Relief Worldwide to use:

- ☐ My story
- ☐ Photographs of me
- ☐ My condition (for example HIV+)

### I understand that my photo and/or information may be used for:

- ☐ Educational purposes
- ☐ Promotional purposes
- ☐ Reporting purposes
- ☐ Other (specify):

Name\*: Age:

Signature or thumb-print::

Location: Date:

### Part B: Consent by parent/carer

- ☐ I confirm that I agree for Islamic Relief Worldwide to carry out the above
- ☐ I have authority to sign this form on their behalf (if unsigned above)
- ☐ I confirm that the child has also agreed to this

Name\*:

Signature or thumb-print::

Relationship to child:

Witness (IRW Staff name): Date:

# 14.

## Terms of Reference for Child Protection Focus Points

The implementation of IR's Child Protection Policy (CPP) and procedures requires all Country Directors (CD) to nominate a staff member to act as the Child Protection (CP) Focal Point for their respective field office.

The nominated staff will be responsible for providing support to the Country Director in implementing IR's Child Protection Policy and procedures, and receive and manage concerns and complaints in accordance with the CPP.

### Key competencies and experience:

- » An interest in the wellbeing of children, safeguarding and child protection matters
- » A willingness to challenge opinion, where necessary, and to drive the child protection agenda
- » Strong listening skills and the ability to deal with sensitive situations with integrity
- » The confidence and good judgment to manage situations relating to the poor conduct/behaviour of others towards a child
- » Necessary skills and commitment to taking on additional roles
- » Sufficient level of seniority – if this is not available, the CP Focal Point will require support from a senior responsible officer who has the necessary status and authority within the country management team to ensure the policy is implemented effectively
- » Professional competences and experience of working directly with local communities
- » Awareness of appropriate international conventions and legal frameworks
- » Fluent in local languages

In countries with a wide geographic area, a number of focal points, possibly one in each project location, should be appointed as necessary, which will be led and coordinated by the local CP Focal Point.

### Duties and responsibilities include:

#### A. Receiving child safeguarding concerns and complaints

- » Act as a first point of contact for staff and beneficiaries on all child protection/protection issues.
- » Responsibility for escalating a concern to the CD and Internal Audit and/or the Global Child Protection Focal Point.
- » Maintain direct contact with the relevant regional child protection coordinator.
- » Provide advice and support to staff concerned about child protection issues and decide what action to take.
- » Ensure that all staff, representatives and staff of partner agencies are made aware of the contact details of their respective focal points for receiving concerns/complaints.
- » Lead the mapping process to identify local child protection resources, child welfare specialists, health and law enforcement stakeholders and attend the relevant coordination meetings.
- » Make appropriate referrals, as appropriate, to organisations/law enforcement agencies that can provide emergency and ongoing support to child abuse cases.
- » Maintain basic management and statistical information to give a local picture of the extent and nature of reported abuse and exploitation, compliant with confidentiality and data protection.

#### B. Provide overall support to the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.

- » Support Country Directors in implementing the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- » Work with programme managers and programme heads to ensure that child protection is being prioritised by the country office in all activities and programmes.
- » Monitor child protection risks associated with the design and implementation of projects, and take appropriate protective actions.
- » Ensure that all new recruits receive a thorough child protection induction and arrange for relevant capacity building of staff.
- » Ensure that awareness is regularly raised amongst beneficiaries (especially children) on the Child Protection Policy and mechanisms for raising concerns/complaints about staff.
- » Provide technical and coordinating support to the team of focal points to ensure standardised approaches are taken, lessons learned are documented and disseminated, and child safeguarding expertise is built.





# 15.

## Islamic Guidance: Safeguarding Behaviour

Islam encourages spiritual growth and provides guidance on how to conduct oneself when dealing with family, work and wider society. It equips people with knowledge and a moral compass, as well as the necessary skills and tools, to define a universal standard by which actions may be deemed moral or immoral.

Everybody is equal regardless of race, religion, creed and gender. This falls in line with one's character and credentials that are part of who we are and must also be considered. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

**“Oh people! Your God is one and your forefather (Adam) is one. An Arab is not better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab, and a red (i.e. white tinged with red) person is not better than a black person and a black person is not better than a red person, except in piety.”**

The key to virtue and good conduct is a strong relationship with God; who sees all and is everywhere. He knows the secrets of the hearts and the intentions behind all actions. Therefore, Islam enjoins moral behaviour in all circumstances; God is aware of each one when no one else is, therefore you cannot deceive Him.

### How to ensure child safeguarding:

To have appropriate attire – business dress should be reflected in accordance with the organisation's handbook;

- » Staff are representatives of Islamic Relief and, as such, both attire and behaviour should always be professional and reflect high standards and uphold the values of the organisation
- » To be mindful of the country in which you are working and their cultural or religious practices
- » Your professional appearance and behaviour reflect on you as a professional –Islamic Relief welcomes individuals who dress appropriately and respectfully within the countries they work in.

When interacting with children, Muhammad (PBUH) said, <sup>10</sup>“If a man and a woman are alone together in an isolated place, then the third is Shaitan” .

- » Khalwa (isolation) takes place when one man or more than one man is alone with one woman/child in a place where no one can see them or enter – if there are two women and a man, for example, this is not khalwa. However, when there is only one

woman, this situation is considered as seclusion and becomes unlawful (this is for the protection of children, women and men from allegations or harm);

- » Ensure that there are two members of staff and/or a family member present when dealing with a child
- » Make sure you are never in isolation or a closed environment with a child
- » Ensure there is safe distance when sitting with a child
- » Ensure that any children who have been adversely affected are made safe, and are looked after and supported by you and colleagues from within your organisation
- » Where possible, female staff should attend to the needs of a female child when reporting cases of abuse to allow for a comfortable environment given the sensitivity of the situation and vice versa for a male.
- » Guarding your gaze is a good practice that fosters modest interaction between the sexes, this means that you should refrain from staring at one's face as guarding your gaze indicates respect for the other person's space and modesty – however this does not mean keeping one's eyes glued to the ground.
- » When relating to children, any unnecessary physical contact should be avoided and staff should respect local customs and cultural practices.

The prophet is reported to have said “A Muslim is he who other Muslims are safe from the harms of his tongue and his hands,” and so staff should be mindful of their tone and language when speaking to children – not loud and domineering or slow and lustful.

**‘O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be [against] rich or poor...’ (An-Nisaa': 135)**

- » Justice represents moral rectitude and fairness, therefore it is of utmost importance that you remain just in your actions in everything that you do, including speaking out against your own colleagues as you have an obligation to report any cause for concern.
- » If you find yourself having to respond to sexually inappropriate behaviour from a child, or what you have been exposed to is emotionally challenging for you, it is important to try and stay calm and keep a clear head in order to make the right decision about how to best protect children/young people at risk.

### What you can do:

- » Be non-judgemental as the children/young people who are being sexually inappropriate towards others may themselves have been abused by others
- » Explain to the child/young person that they must stop their behaviour, being clear and direct in your communication and using language that is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding
- » Remain calm, be firm and keep control of your own emotions and tone
- » Explain to the child why their behaviour is unacceptable
- » Give the child a chance to explain their behaviour
- » Make sure that you fully understand your obligations to report inappropriate sexual behaviour (i.e. behaviour that requires immediate further advice) and the likely immediate consequences for the child/young person of reporting
- » Contact the appropriate authorities in your area – this will be a child or family protection unit, or the social work department or the police
- » Take some time to write down the facts of what you have observed and details of witnesses as soon as you can – if a child/young person's behaviour is worrying but not at the extreme end of behaviours (i.e. behaviour that might give cause for concern), intervene and question the child/young person where appropriate to do so, increase your vigilance and seek further advice





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