

# protecting children

keeping us all safe

This is an official policy of CISV International. Other related policies and guidelines are:

- CISV Approach to Risk Management (Info File N-01);
- CISV Guidelines on Discrimination, Selection & Behaviour and Selection Guidelines for Persons with Programme Responsibility (Info File N-05 and N-06);
- CISV Behaviour and Cultural Sensitivity (Info File R-07);
- CISV Programme Guides; and,
- CISV International Crisis Communications Guide.

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## Introduction

As a peace education organization, CISV is committed to and encourages respect for human rights and dignity. CISV believes that every child who participates in CISV activities has the right to enjoy a safe environment and be protected from harm. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have a right to protection, CISV believes that it has a duty of care and obligation to protect those children for whom we are given responsibility.

**We believe that the welfare of children is the highest priority and that it is the responsibility of everyone in CISV to ensure that they are protected. This policy sets out CISV's commitment to Child Protection and aims to promote good practice in:**

- providing children with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of CISV; and,
- allowing all volunteers and staff to make informed and confident responses to specific Child Protection issues.

## Definitions

**Child:** anyone under the age of 18 (in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

**Adult:** anyone aged 18+.

**Participant:** every person who attends a CISV International programme, who is not a “person in a position of programme responsibility”. *Note that in some programmes, participants are adults. Though not children, they have the same right to expect a safe environment and appropriate behaviour from other participants and persons in positions of programme responsibility.*

**Person in a position of programme responsibility:** Any staff, leader, Junior Counsellor, host family or other person who has responsibility for all or aspects of delivering a CISV International programme. *Note that in some cases, such persons may be ‘children’ (e.g. Junior Counsellors aged 16/17), who are, therefore, both responsible for and covered by this Child Protection Policy.*

**Child Protection:** refers to the actions taken in order to prevent or stop all behaviours considered dangerous for the physical and psychological health of children.

**Child abuse:** is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It often occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Even in situations where it may be felt that the child accepted or somehow invited the abuse, it is still abuse.

Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other children, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family. The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in a residential setting or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse

because they fail to prevent another person harming that child or neglecting the needs of the child.

There are four main types of child abuse: **physical abuse**, **sexual abuse**, **emotional abuse** and **neglect**. Children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse.

- **Emotional** – the emotional mistreatment of a child which may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only to meet the needs of another person. These may include imposing expectations or interactions that are inappropriate or beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limiting the child’s ability to explore or learn or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.
- **Physical** – causing bodily or physical harm e.g. hitting, poisoning, burning, giving children alcohol or drugs.
- **Sexual** – when adults use children to meet their own sexual urges; this may or may not include physical contact with the child (e.g. any sexual activity, intimate touching, sexually suggestive remarks).
- **Neglect** – when adults fail to meet the child’s basic needs to an extent that is likely to result in serious impact on the child’s health or development (e.g. failing to provide adequate food, shelter, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).

**In addition, bullying is a form of child abuse although often, but not always, the person who is the bully is also a child.**

**Bullying** means deliberate, hurtful behaviour towards another person that is usually repeated over a period of time. The outcome will always be painful and distressing for the victim. There are four main types of bullying:

- physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, slapping or any use of violence);
- verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name-calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages);
- emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group); or,
- sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

## **Part 1: Our Policy**

CISV International will not tolerate child abuse and is committed to:

- Taking into account, in all of our planning and activities, the interests and wellbeing of children;
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from neglect and physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse;
- Responding to all suspicions and allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately; and,

- Recruiting CISV volunteers and staff to work with children with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and providing them with training in good practice and Child Protection procedures.

**CISV volunteers and staff, who wish to work with children, are responsible for following this Policy at all times.**

## **1.1 Review**

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legislation. Compliance with procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

## **1.2 Our Policy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

CISV's Child Protection Policy is based on the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It provides a comprehensive framework for the protection, provision for and participation of all children without discrimination to ensure their survival and development to the maximum extent possible.

## **1.3 Our Policy and National Laws**

As an international organization, CISV exists in over 60 countries. CISV's International Office (IO) is based in Great Britain and must observe the laws of Great Britain. National Associations (NAs) and their Chapters must observe the laws of their own country/province/state/city. It is, therefore essential that NAs and Chapters find out about the relevant laws that govern how they can operate and deliver CISV programmes and develop procedures, guidance and training in line with both local law and this Policy. At the same time, CISV International has rules and standards that seek to create a consistent approach and which, in some cases, may be stricter than national or local laws. This Policy must, therefore, be followed in addition to the relevant national and local laws on Child Protection.

## **Part 2: Our Rules**

CISV promotes and expects behaviour that is sensitive, respectful, caring and that contributes to creating a healthy and safe environment for children and adults; an environment where children and adults feel able to come forward with concerns and receive support from those around them.

### **2.1 Adult Code of Behaviour**

CISV International has adopted an Adult Code of Behaviour that every single adult involved in a CISV programme and/or a position of responsibility within CISV, should respect and put into practice at all times. All volunteers will be given a copy of this Code of Behaviour during training or volunteer orientation and must become familiar with its requirements, by reading and understanding the Code. *The Code can be found at Appendix One of this policy.*

## **2.2 General Behaviour within CISV Programmes**

The above Adult Code of Behaviour reflects the guidance and rules set out in the CISV Behaviour and Cultural Sensitivity Policy (Info File R-07). All persons involved in CISV International programmes must be made aware of and comply with these rules, which include forbidding the following in programmes:

- Any sexual intimacy or the appearance of sexual intimacy;
- Use of narcotics;
- Underage drinking; and,
- Any form of abuse, corporal punishment or intolerance

Violation of any of these rules will lead to consequences up to and including exclusion from the programme. Violation of some of these rules may lead to consequences up to and including informing the appropriate external authorities.

## **2.3 Health and Safety within CISV Programmes**

To ensure the physical protection of children, their health and safety must also be provided for. CISV programme policy includes specific requirements for:

- The ratio of adults to children;
- Upholding all local public health/ health and safety standards and laws;
- Ready access to medical care;
- Healthy diet and nutrition; and,
- Accommodation of special needs, to the fullest extent possible.

For further information and guidance please see CISV Behaviour and Cultural Sensitivity Policy (Info File R-07) and our Programme Guides.

## **2.4 Behaviour and Communication outside of CISV Programmes**

People in positions of programme responsibility must understand that they are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom they are responsible. This means that all contact with children before or after a programme should reflect the same values and behaviour.

Abuse can take place not only in person but also through other forms of contact (e.g. phone, text messages, emails, social networking sites).

It is important to encourage safe online or distance communication and to understand that our responsibility to children extends to any contact we have with them, be it by phone, text, chat, social network sites etc.

It is particularly important to recognise that online communications present many positive, but also negative opportunities.

The CISV International website allows CISV members to communicate with their programme group, before and after the programme they attend. They can also communicate with other members of CISV Chapters and programmes. In order to enhance online safety, participants under the age of 16 are only able to contact other participants and adults within their own programme.

However, many CISV members (youth and adult) may also have a personal account on other social networking sites. Whenever using social network profiles, programme staff and leaders should always bear in mind their responsibility as adults in a position of trust. CISV expects them to keep the distance online with young people that they would keep in the 'offline' world. CISV further expects that they would not maintain any online friendship on a social media site with a child they know to be under the minimum age required by such sites. *Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on communication with children via social media.*

## **2.5 Photography**

Care should be given when uploading photographs taken in a camp; only images of children in suitable dress should be used to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. It is difficult to specify exactly what content is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities in a camp. However, photographs of certain activities - swimming, for example - present a much greater risk of potential misuse. Images of these activities should focus on the overall activity, not on a particular child, and should avoid full face and close-up body shots. This means, for example, that photographs of children in a pool would be appropriate if shot poolside from waist or shoulder up. *Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on use of photographs in social media.*

## **Part 3: Selection**

CISV relies on our dedicated volunteers and paid staff. We recognise how important it is that we have safe and effective practices in place for recruiting people who will be working with children and to prepare them for their role.

CISV International requires the following steps and precautions in selecting all persons with CISV programme responsibility. The selection process is set out in detail in our Programme Guides. Criteria and considerations regarding background and behaviour are stated in Selection Guidelines for Persons with Programme Responsibility (Info File R-06).

*Note. On occasion, people withdraw and replacements have to be found very quickly. In all cases, however, each of the steps below must be followed before a person can be selected for a position of programme responsibility. In order to be prepared for such an eventuality, some National Associations recommend that chapters keep a list of possible leaders and hosts who have been through these steps and been trained recently as 'backups'.*

### 3.1 Age Requirements

Every adult in a position of trust and responsibility in CISV programmes should be at least 21 years old on the day of the departure (for leaders) or on the day of the beginning of the programme (for programme 'staff'). Some programmes require that at least one staff member must be older than 21.

Junior staff or leaders (aged 18/19) are only permitted in some programmes, where there are others aged 21+.

### 3.2 Application Requirements

Applicants for a position of responsibility in CISV programmes must complete an application form, giving information about their experience, interests and background. They must also sign to say that they do not have history of criminal activity, illness, child abuse, drug/alcohol abuse, prejudice etc. that would disqualify them from participation in CISV programmes.

Applicants must provide two confidential references, which must be checked.

### 3.3 Criminal Record Check

Police checks are required for all staff/ leaders/ JCs (aged 18+) at all CISV International programmes and activities. Although procedures may vary and it may not be possible to obtain the same information in all countries, all CISV National Associations must investigate and see what information can be obtained. CISV has to work with the best information it can obtain according to national laws and procedures.

It is essential under all circumstances to find out whether an applicant has a criminal record of convictions or arrests, which would make them unsuitable to take on a role of trust with children in a CISV programme.

The following are considered inappropriate for a position of leadership and trust in CISV and **cannot** be chosen for positions of programme responsibility:

- Persons who are listed on a national Child Protection Register
- Persons who have been charged with or convicted of serious criminal activity. Serious criminal activity includes, but is not limited to: murder; a serious sex offence; an offence committed by an adult involving intentionally wounding or causing grievous bodily harm; indecency offences; kidnapping; offences connected with child prostitution or child pornography.

There are also some conditions or tendencies, which could make someone unsuitable for a position of programme responsibility. Persons with a history of conviction or treatment for the following behaviours, except in cases of unusual circumstances, are considered inappropriate for a position of programme responsibility in CISV:

- Alcohol/ drug abuse;

- Dishonesty;
- Emotional or behavioural disturbance;
- Prejudice or intolerance;
- Violence or lack of self control;
- Unable to handle stress appropriately.

Having a criminal record, in itself, does not necessarily mean that the person cannot assume a role of programme responsibility. It depends on the contents of the record and whether it relates to 'serious criminal activity' or other behaviours or attitudes that would make the person unsuitable for a position of trust with children.

### **3.4 Interview**

All applicants will be required to attend an interview with CISV representatives.

- A check should be made that the application form and procedures have been completed in full.
- The requirements and responsibilities of the role should be clarified so that they understand what is expected of them and what they can expect.

### **3.5 Membership Requirement**

Every adult in a position of trust and responsibility in CISV programmes must be or become a member of CISV. They should share our values and make every effort to put them into practice.

## **Part 4: Training**

Safe recruitment practices of volunteers and staff must be followed by essential training for the roles they are undertaking. Our programme leaders, staff and host families must all be trained to recognise the situations where abuse of children may occur in order to enable them to react appropriately if they have concerns.

Training after recruitment should help volunteers to:

- Understand the Adult Code of Behaviour;
- Consider their own practices against what is considered good practice;
- Understand and follow the CISV procedures for reporting and recording concerns;
- Recognise their responsibilities;
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child;
- Work safely and effectively with children; and,
- Understand how CISV's Child Protection Policy also protects them in their work with children.

## **Part 5: Acting to Protect the Child When Abuse is Suspected**

Part of providing a high standard of care is reacting appropriately when something does happen, or is suspected to have happened, and there is a need to protect the endangered child.

It is often very hard to admit that abuse is taking place within our organization, especially to children we know and particularly by people we trust. We cannot assume that because we work in a voluntary organization that all individuals are caring individuals, as this may lead us to fail to hear or recognise or deal with the possibility that abuse is happening.

If you have a child protection concern, it can be difficult to know what to do. You may be worried about raising your concern and may think it is best to keep it yourself, perhaps feeling that it's none of your business or only a suspicion. CISV will always treat your concerns seriously and if you have such concerns, we want to hear from you – we all have a responsibility to protect the children in our care.

It is important in all circumstances to share your concern with someone who can make sure that the matter is looked at and dealt with as soon as possible. You should always pass on your concern to the 'person in charge' or, where your concern is about them, to the local or national Risk Manager.

### **5.1 Hearing a child's disclosure**

**It is not the responsibility of the person first hearing or encountering a case of alleged or suspected abuse to decide whether or not abuse has taken place; it is their responsibility to immediately report the concern.**

CISV should create a positive atmosphere where children will feel free to come forward in cases of abuse. It may be that the abuse is taking place outside of the programme, in the child's home or community. Every child has the right to be listened to. It is our duty to listen to any concern they may have and to take them seriously, especially when talking about harm or abuse. It is helpful to ask 'open' questions that need more than 'yes' or 'no' responses but **no** attempt should be made to investigate.

It is important to tell a child who discloses abuse that such information must be shared and cannot be kept 'secret' or confidential. The child should be told that the information will be only be shared with those who need to know.

### **5.2. Reporting to the CISV person in charge and the Risk Manager**

When someone has a concern, they must immediately discuss the concern with the 'person in charge'. The 'person in charge' in a programme will generally be the Programme Director; in an Interchange it will be the Local Interchange Coordinator (LIC).

The 'person in charge' is responsible for letting the person who has reported the concern know how it will be dealt with. The person reporting the concern should ensure they receive this information.

The 'person in charge' will then contact the local Risk Manager immediately, or as soon as possible that day.

If the concern is about the Director or LIC, another member of staff or adult leader should be approached and they should contact the local Risk Manager directly.

The Risk Manager is responsible for responding within 12 hours and then, as soon as possible, investigating and/or seeking relevant professional advice, advising the programme staff and leaders and ensuring that the incident is documented and reported on an Incident Report Form (see below).

If concerns arise during a local or national activity such as Junior Branch activities, they should be reported directly to the local/national Risk Manager and in line with local laws. This should be documented and reported as below.

A Local Risk Manager should report regularly to the National Risk Manager and should consult directly with the National Risk Manager with regard to any serious incident. They must also keep the Chapter and National Boards advised of any incidents which relate to that National Association.

If the Local or National Risk Manager feels that additional CISV advice would be helpful, they should contact the International Risk Manager for assistance. In the event of a serious incident, CISV International should be informed within 12 hours. The guidance in the CISV Crisis Communications Guide should be followed.

### 5.2.1 Recording reporting and documenting a concern

**CISVers should understand their responsibility to immediately report any concerns they have regarding the behaviour or welfare of a child or another volunteer to the person in charge (see above).** In some countries there will be a legal requirement to report such concerns to the appropriate authorities (see 5.2.3); the Risk Manager will be able to advise on this. After a concern has been reported it is important to record or document the concern. When documenting a concern, care should be taken not to record personal opinion, only facts. If an injury e.g. bruise, cut, has been observed, the location of this injury should be noted on a body chart. The body chart that CISV uses is available online and can be appended where relevant to Incident Report Forms (see below).

### 5.2.2. Filling in a report form

A CISV Incident Report Form (IRF) must be completed whenever an incident – requiring medical attention, involving criminal behaviour and/or violation of CISV Guidelines – occurs at a CISV programme or activity. In case of **doubt, an IRF should still be completed.** Anyone who feels there is a matter that should be reported can fill out an IRF. The form contains instructions on completing it and sending it to the right place.

The form can be found on the Resources section of [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org) as can the body chart mentioned above.

The Local/National Risk Manager must ensure that an IRF is completed and submitted and that a copy of the report and all related documents is stored confidentially by the National Association.

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises. The information given on an Incident Report Form should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child;
- The child's home contact details;
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else;
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information;
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay;
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries using the body chart to indicate the location of such bruises or injury. Also details of any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes;
- Details of witnesses to any incident/s;
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred;
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Details of the alleged abuser, if known.

### **5.2.3. Reporting to the Authorities**

Where it is suspected that any form of criminal behaviour is taking place at a programme, the appropriate local authorities should be informed immediately and their advice followed. If it is suspected that some form of abuse or criminal behaviour is occurring in the child's home or home community, the local Risk Manager should contact the Risk Manager of the child's home National Association or Chapter and they, in turn, should investigate and/or involve the appropriate authorities in that community.

## **5.3 Confidentiality**

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and shared on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- The person making the allegation;
- The CISV 'person in charge' (Camp Director or Local Interchange Coordinator);
- The Risk Manager (local and/or national);
- Parents of the child;
- Social services/ police/doctor;
- CISV International.

In cases referred to them, the social services/ police/ doctor will advise on who should approach the alleged abuser or, where the alleged abuser is under 18 years of age, their parents.

#### **5.4 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

If the person accused of abuse is in the programme, the Risk Manager will also need to consider how to deal with that person. Guidance must be sought from the appropriate local authorities.

- The Local/National Risk Manager will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- If the alleged abuser is at an international event, the Risk Manager of the hosting Chapter/National Association will decide, on the advice of the authorities, whether they should be asked to return to their home country.
- Following their inquiries, social services or police inquiries may decide not to pursue the matter. The National Risk Manager will still assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and/or retrained and how this could be sensitively handled. In such cases, the National Risk Manager must reach a decision based upon the available information. The welfare of the child must be the highest priority throughout the child's involvement within CISV.

### **Part 6 Following-Up Internationally**

When a concern is brought to a Local or National Risk Manager, in the first instance, it is up to them to get more information on the matter and/or make sure that the relevant authorities are contacted.

Any serious incidents or concerns should be reported to CISV International within 12 hours. The guidance in the CISV Crisis Communications Guide should be followed.

As we are an international organization, it is also important, that incidents be considered from an international perspective. It may be that one incident has implications for several National Associations or programmes or training.

CISV International will review all Incident Reports received and will determine whether any further action is required. The International Risk Manager will take the lead on any investigation and may request that a programme committee, National Association or other party make inquiries and report back on the results. The International Risk Manager may then advise on specific actions. In serious cases, the Risk Manager will consult with the International Executive to determine the best course of action.

CISV International keeps a record of all incidents reported, inquiries made and actions taken. All incidents are also summarised anonymously and kept in a database of issues, from which annual reports are sent to National Associations for review and further action as needed.

CISV always tries to learn lessons from the past. Without breaching confidentiality of names, Risk Managers are encouraged to share their knowledge of incidents and how they were handled.

## **Appendix 1      Adult Code of Behaviour**

### **Adult Code of Behaviour**

As a person in a position of programme responsibility you are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom you are responsible.

#### **Good Practice**

**DO** treat everyone with dignity and respect

**DO** set an example you would wish others to follow

**DO** treat all children equally – show no favouritism

**DO** respect a child's right to personal privacy

**DO** avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child -- your actions, no matter how well-intentioned, might be misinterpreted by them or someone else

**DO** avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust; for example, a sexual relationship with a participant, even if they are over the age of consent

**DO** have separate sleeping accommodation for children and adults

**DO** plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others – avoid spending time alone with a child in private or out of sight/hearing of others.

**DO** allow children to talk about any concerns they may have

**DO** encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like

**DO** avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour from children, such as tantrums and crushes

**DO** keep other leaders informed of where you are and what you are doing

**DO** take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer them immediately to the person in charge, i.e. the Programme Director or local/ national Risk Manager

#### **Poor Practice**

**DO NOT** trivialise or belittle abuse or concerns

**DO NOT** form an intimate relationship with a child or any other relationship that would be an abuse of trust

**DO NOT** allow abusive activities between children such as initiation ceremonies or bullying

**DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact – physical, verbal, sexual

**DO NOT** make sexually suggestive remarks or threats to a child, even in fun

**DO NOT** use inappropriate language, whether speaking or writing – in person or by phone, email or through use of social media

**DO NOT** allow a child to use inappropriate language unchallenged

**DO NOT** let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

*This Code is based on material created by The Scout Association (UK) and used with permission  
‘Young People first: a code of good practice for adults’*

## Appendix 2      Safety and Social Networking Sites

In addition to the Adult Code of Behaviour, here are some guidelines on how to behave appropriately toward children online or in other forms of communications.

- Remember you are in a position of trust and are a role model at all times.
- Conduct yourself appropriately, as you would face-to-face.
- Do not engage in one-to-one communication with children or via text messages, instant messaging or chat facilities unless it relates specifically to your CISV responsibilities.
- Before sharing your social media accounts with a child, consider the things you like to share with your peers – would they be suitable or appropriate to share with that child?
- When using a social network account, you should always think of how any digital communication might appear to someone else. Compared with a conversation in the real world, technology increases the potential for messages to be seen out of context, misinterpreted or forwarded to others.
- Do not provide personal details about children on your website or social networking group.
- Always ensure you have parental permission to use any photographs of children and only use their first names on any caption.
- Only use appropriate photographs on your site – remember that everyone can view them.
- If you are concerned about the way a child is attempting to contact you, report it immediately to your local Risk Manager.
- If you need to email children, always copy the message to another adult.
- **WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU NOT USE YOUR PERSONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN.**