



# SKIP Child Safeguarding Policy

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<b>Updates</b>	Natalie Cook, 2015. Andy Young, 2017.
<b>External Reviewers</b>	Keeping Children Safe
<b>Published</b>	July 2017
<b>Review Date</b>	August 2020

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## Foreword

Any organisation that works with children has a fundamental duty of care towards them, a duty of care to protect them from all forms of abuse and exploitation. This child safeguarding policy has been created as a means of ensuring the protection of all children involved with SKIP projects.

As SKIP operates in different countries and thus within differing local contexts, it makes the development of one policy for all very difficult. The standards set out in this policy aim to be dynamic and offer a general framework for approaching the issues of child safeguarding. Each SKIP branch is encouraged to adapt this policy, in order to match the specific needs and requirements of their project.

No organisation is immune to the issues of child protection and as such it is imperative that SKIP places this child safeguarding policy at the forefront of all of its actions. This child safeguarding policy demonstrates our commitment to protect all of the children we work with across all SKIP projects. This policy should be available to all and actively promoted.

Dr Stacey Mearns  
SKIP Patron

Authored by Stacey Mearns 2010  
Updated by Natalie Cook 2015

## Introduction

Child abuse is an action by another person, adult or child, that causes significant harm to a child. Safeguarding children are the actions taken to prevent child abuse. Abuse can take many forms but most fit into the following categories:

- Physical abuse - intentional use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.
- Emotional or psychological abuse – ongoing emotional maltreatment or emotional neglect of a child, which can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child, isolate or ignore them.
- Sexual abuse – when a child is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities, this doesn't necessarily have to involve physical contact, for example, it can occur online.
- Neglect – the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs, these can include educational, medical, nutritional and emotional.

Other areas of abuse to consider include online, child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse.

Children may be at risk of abuse and exploitation not only from individuals in the communities in which they live, but also by aid workers and volunteers. Some children, for example those with disabilities may be more vulnerable than others.

There are huge difficulties in applying child safeguarding principles in the many different legal, social and cultural contexts in which SKIP works. The SKIP child safeguarding policy must be applied in ways that are culturally sensitive, but at the same time without condoning acts of maltreatment that are universally regarded as abusive.

There are several advantages to implementing child safeguarding standards:

Children are protected

Although no policies or processes can offer complete protection for children, following the sections laid out in this policy will minimise the risk to children of abuse and exploitation.

Volunteers are protected

By implementing this policy, all SKIP volunteers will have clear guidance on their own behaviour around children and what to do if they notice or are told about inappropriate behaviour on the part of others.

SKIP is protected

By implementing this policy SKIP is making clear its commitment to safeguard the children we work with.

In conclusion, this policy is an attempt to ensure that SKIP can develop practice which safeguards children from abuse and exploitation. It is not intended to be wholly prescriptive but to provide a helpful basis for discussion and determining local standards and how they will be measured and achieved. Everyone involved with SKIP has a fundamental duty of care towards the children we work with.

## Child Safeguarding within SKIP

1.1 General principles (based on the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child):

1.1.1 A child is defined as any person under the age of 18.

1.1.2 All children have an equal right to protection from abuse and exploitation.

1.1.3 All children should be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities should be challenged.

1.1.4 Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.

1.2 SKIP has a duty of care to protect the children who our projects seek to assist and with whom our volunteers work.

1.3 SKIP child safeguarding policy aims:

1.3.1 To provide all children involved with SKIP projects with appropriate safety and protection.

1.3.2 To enable all persons involved with SKIP to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

1.4 As an organisation we must all work together to ensure that:

1.4.1 The welfare of the child is paramount.

1.4.2 All children, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, sexuality or religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse.

1.4.3 All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

1.4.4 All SKIP members have a responsibility and duty to report all child protection concerns to the SKIP Trustees.

1.5 In order to ensure its appropriateness and effectiveness, this policy will be reviewed and updated every 3 years.

1.6 The Trustee responsible for Child Protection will lead on Child Safeguarding. However, ultimate legal responsibility for Child Safeguarding is shared between all trustees.

## Implementation

2.1 The SKIP Trustees are responsible for ensuring adequate levels of child safeguarding and the implementation of this policy within SKIP as an organisation.

2.2 The SKIP Trustee responsible for safeguarding is the named person for ensuring adequate levels of child safeguarding training throughout SKIP, at national and branch level.

2.3 It is the responsibility of the SKIP Branch Co-ordinators, in association with the SKIP National Committee and Trustees to ensure that their committee and volunteers are appropriately trained in safeguarding and SKIP's child safeguarding policy.

2.5 It is recommended that the branches consider involving local student union/external trainers for their volunteer safeguarding training, as well as utilising the SKIP safeguarding training resources.

2.6 All SKIP volunteers must receive appropriate child safeguarding training before volunteering on any SKIP project.

1.6.1 Any SKIP volunteer who has not received child safeguarding training will not be allowed to volunteer with SKIP.

1.7 A Child Protection risk assessment for all SKIP projects will be conducted annually as part of the completion of the health and safety pre-project process. Risk mitigation strategies which minimise the risk to children will be developed and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

## Reporting Procedures

3.1 Issues of child protection can arise in any of the following situations:

3.1.1 Responding to a child who says either they or another child is/are being abused.

3.1.2 Responding to allegations against a volunteer.

3.1.3 Responding to concerns about a child's welfare where there is no specific disclosure/allegation.

3.2 In the event of a disclosure it is important to:

3.2.1 React calmly.

3.2.2 Reassure the child that they were right to tell but do not promise confidentiality.

3.2.3 Take all disclosures seriously.

3.3 During all reporting procedures the following should be adhered to:

3.3.1 The child's welfare is of paramount importance

3.3.2 All concerns must be addressed in a strictly confidential manner.

3.3.3 Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

3.4 The following reporting procedures must be followed for any child protection concern or allegation:

3.4.1 If pre or post project, the individual who first received/witnessed the concern should contact the SKIP Trustee responsible for safeguarding who will complete an incident form and follow the red incident contingency plan.

3.4.2 If on project, the individual who first received/witnessed the concern should contact the SKIP trustee on call who will complete an incident form and follow the red incident contingency plan

3.4.3 All child protection concerns or allegations will be reviewed by the SKIP Trustees who will liaise with statutory child protection agencies if required.

3.4.4 SKIP's trustees are responsible for reporting any child protection incident which has resulted or could result in a significant risk to SKIP's beneficiaries or reputation to the Charity Commission immediately.

3.5 Recording Information

3.5.1 All information relating to a child protection concern or allegation should be recorded on a SKIP Incident Form by the trustee who receives the information (see appendix 1).

3.5.2 Recorded information should be accurate, factual and jargon-free. If opinions and judgments are made, it should be clear who has expressed them and how and why certain conclusions were reached.

3.5.3 Any concerns recorded about a SKIP members conduct towards a child should relate to the SKIP code of conduct (see relevant section in this policy).

3.5.4 All written information should be signed and dated.

3.6 Managing Information

3.6.1 Child protection incident report forms containing personal data should be treated as confidential.

3.6.2 The Data Protection Act permits the sharing of confidential information without consent where it is considered necessary to safeguard a child or young person.

3.6.3 Access to child protection incident report forms should be restricted to certain

named individuals as determined by the SKIP Trustees

3.6.3.1 Such named individuals must understand their obligation to handle such information in a responsible manner.

3.6.4 All child protection information should be stored in secure conditions with access to designated people only.

3.6.4.1 Manual records should be stored in lockable containers.

3.6.4.2 Electronic records should be password protected.

## Response procedures

4.1 It is not the responsibility of anyone involved with SKIP to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate individuals/organisations/authorities.

4.2 SKIP Trustees will work with the branch and the collaborating organisation to determine what child protection services are available within their project country.

4.3 The action taken will differ according to:

4.3.1 The nature of the complainant.

4.3.2 The infrastructure of the SKIP project.

4.3.3 The country and cultural context within which the SKIP project is based.

4.4 Child protection allegations involving a SKIP member

4.4.1 On receiving an allegation, the SKIP Trustees will initiate an internal enquiry.

4.4.1.2 Where appropriate, this will involve liaison with statutory organisations.

4.4.2 The volunteer will receive immediate suspension until the internal enquiry is conducted.

## Training

5.1 All SKIP members must receive child safeguarding training and have a thorough working knowledge of the SKIP child safeguarding policy.

5.2 The aims of SKIP child safeguarding training are to enable SKIP members to:

5.2.1 Work safely and effectively with children

5.2.2 Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor

practice or possible safeguarding issues.

5.2.3 Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.

5.2.4 To understand the SKIP reporting procedures, and feel confident in undertaking the reporting steps.

5.2.5. Analyse their own behaviour against the SKIP code of conduct, to ensure their behaviour will protect them from false allegations.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the SKIP Trustee responsible for safeguarding to:

5.3.1 Ensure adequate standards of child safeguarding training nationally.

5.3.2 Create resources to aid child Safeguarding training within SKIP.

## Prevention

### 6.1 Recruitment

6.1.1 SKIP recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children and therefore we must take steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with SKIP.

6.1.2 Please make reference to the SKIP Recruitment Policy for guidance on recruitment issues.

### 6.2 The use of photos/media materials

6.2.1 SKIP wants to avoid the inappropriate use of photographs or film footage of any child involved with SKIP

6.2.2 The following minimum standards must be met in order to ensure that human dignity and the right to personal privacy are respected.

6.2.2.1 Always gain consent before taking a photo/film of anyone, preferably written but if this is not possible, verbal consent.

6.2.2.2 You should try to gain parental/guardian permission to use an image of a child and explain how it will be used. If consent from the parent/guardian is not possible, consent from the partner organisation should be sought.

6.2.2.3 Avoid using children's names (first name or surname) in photograph captions.

6.2.2.4 Only use images that appropriately represent the organisation and the activity, for example, a teaching session to publicise your education intervention.

6.2.2.5 Only use images of children in suitable dress.

6.2.2.6 Photos and films should be stored safely.

### 6.2.3 Guidance for SKIP branches wishing to use photos for publicity and or social media

6.2.3.1 Photos or images taken for the use of SKIP will fall under the remit of personal data and as such the data protection act will apply. The act will not be breached so long as the children and/or their guardians are aware of what the photos will be used for (e.g. publicity) and give their consent. In summary, to use such photos the above minimum standards must be met and consent must be sought.

### 6.2.4 Guidance for volunteers

6.2.4.1 Photos taken purely for personal use are exempt from the data protection act.

6.2.4.2 We ask that you do not publish photos or personal information (age, last name, geographical location, health, education or other) of the children you have worked with, whilst on a SKIP project, online or on any form of social media, as this is a risk to the privacy, dignity and personal safety of the child.

## 6.3 The SKIP Code of Conduct

6.3.1 All SKIP volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to minimise the potential for misunderstandings and allegations.

6.3.2 The SKIP code of conduct aims to promote good practice:

6.3.2.1 Always work with children in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.

6.3.2.2 Treat all children equally with respect and dignity.

6.3.2.3 Always put the welfare of the child first.

6.3.2.4 If any form of manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and with the presence of another person.

6.3.2.5 Keep an up to date first aid record of any injury that occurs to a child, along with details of treatment given.

6.3.2.6 Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with any child away from others.

6.3.2.7 Report immediately any suspicion that a child could be at risk of harm or abuse.

6.3.2.8 Only restrain a child who is at imminent risk of inflicting harm to themselves or others.

#### 6.4 Externals

6.4.1 Any external wishing to visit a SKIP project must undergo a criminal background check.

6.4.2 Whilst visiting the project, all externals should be accompanied by a member of SKIP at all times.

### Working with SKIP partner organizations

7.1 SKIP child safeguarding policy should form an essential part of all SKIP MOU's.

7.2 The SKIP child safeguarding policy should be actively promoted to all SKIP partner organizations.

7.3 There should be a process of engagement with SKIP partner organizations on safeguarding issues to ensure mutual learning and development of good practice.

7.4 SKIP partner organizations should be encouraged to develop their own child safeguarding policies. If they do not have their own, they must abide by the principles contained within SKIP's Safeguarding Policy for the duration of the partnership.

## Appendix 1: SKIP SOS Incident Form

### SKIP SOS Incident Form



Name:

Branch / volunteer involved:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Place of incident:

Date form completed:

Description of incident: (please attach any relevant emails)

How it was managed:

Follow up plan/ further support needed:

## Appendix 2: Red Incident Contingency Pathway

# Red Incident Contingency Pathway

Incidents where there is a threat to the safety of the volunteer(s), or serious and imminent threat to the project's future. Includes any time where use of the Contingency Fund may be necessary. **Note, if it is a child protection incident, please contact Trustee SOS directly.**

- Child protection concern
- Major accident or illness
- Physical/sexual assault
- Mental health issue
- Infectious disease outbreak
- Natural disaster
- Civil unrest

