



Child Safeguarding Policy

Version: 1



2024 -2026

This child safeguarding policy must be reviewed every three years and approved by the Executive Management of Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl.



SUMMARIES

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Introduction | 12 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies |
| 2 Key Principles | 14 CSC Code of Conduct |
| 3 Definitions of Key Terms in Child Safeguarding | 17 Code of Conduct Adherence Declaration Form |
| 5 Indicators of Abuse | 19 Reporting and Response Procedures |
| 6 Working with CSC | 20 Incident Reporting Form |
| 10 Online Safety for Children | 21 Conclusion and Acknowledgement |
| 10 Commitment and Procedure to Ensure Child Safety | |



Presentation of the organization

Community Support Center Asbl / CSC-Asbl is a non-profit organization created and registered under number 112/SKV/CA/6937 with the provincial ministries of Justice of South Kivu in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Vision, Mission and Values



We promote the human rights of women and children through fellowship and empowerment. We bring joy and hope for a better future to survivors of conflict so that they can become productive members of society.



We provide vital support and assistance to women and children who have endured the horrors of war, ethnic conflict and natural disasters. with the goal that they can regain meaningful participation in society.



Dignity
Humanity
Solidarity



SECTION I: POLICY

1. Introduction

- It is within the framework of ensuring the safeguarding of children and girls who are survivors and victims of wars, ethnic conflicts and those who live in extreme precariousness that Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl has put in place this safeguarding policy document in order to minimize the risks to which its operations, programs, staff and all stakeholders come into direct or indirect contact with children in the context of our work.
- CSC-Asbl works directly with child survivors and victims of wars, ethnic conflicts and violence, in short, children affected by conflicts in Eastern DR Congo.

It is recommended that the staff of CSC-Asbl and all our stakeholders put into practice the content of this document and contribute as much as they can to inform the community about the importance and the means of ensuring the safeguarding of children.

Our organization has a clear policy aligned with the four child safeguarding standards outlined by Keeping Children Safe. These are:

1. Policy,
2. People,
3. Procedures and
4. Responsibility.

These four standards minimize the risk of harm to children and clearly outline the measures in place to respond when protection issues arise.

This document applies the principles of children's rights in accordance with the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As a member of CSC-Asbl we recognize that "**child safeguarding is everyone's duty**". Although we cannot predict everything that children can face, we will do our best to keep them safe in the context of our work.



2. Principles

The United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child is our reference for the safeguarding and protection of children.

Within CSC-Asbl we recognize that:

- **Children:** A child is a person under the age of 18.
- All children, boys or girls, have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, the language they speak, their religion, what they think, what they look like, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor, who their parents or relatives are and what they think or do. No child shall be treated unfairly for any reason. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 2).
- Children have the right to freely express their opinion on matters that concern them. Adults should listen to them carefully and take them seriously. (Section 12)
- Children also have the right to think, to share ideas, to access information, and to protection against violence.
- Children who have been injured or who have been victims of abuse, neglect or war have the right to get help so that they can recover and regain their dignity. (Item39)
- Each child has the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities. (Section 31)
- We have a duty to protect children from any abuse or harm.
- We are role models for children, so we must show the appropriate behavior to both children and society.
- Working with or for children requires patience.
- Any decision concerning a child must take full account of the child's best interests.
- As members of **Keeping Children Safe** and as an organization working with child survivors and victims we have a duty to protect the children with whom we work, those we are directly or indirectly in contact with and those who are affected by our work, programs and our operations.
- Our organization understands the priority to be given to child safeguarding and understands that all child safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the designated and trained child safeguarding person. It is never appropriate to wait and see or think about matters when a child may be at risk of serious harm.



Definitions of Key Terms in Child Safeguarding

Child survivors and victims of war and conflict: Child survivors and victims of wars are all children who have been directly or indirectly affected by the effects of wars or conflicts (i.e. who have lost one or both parents due to conflicts or have been tortured or mistreated during the conflict). (Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl)

Youth: A person between the ages of 15 and 24, according to the upper age limit of the United Nations definition of youth.

Safeguarding children: "The responsibility of organizations to ensure that their staff, operations and programs do not harm children, that is, that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organization has about the safety of children within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities."

Abuse: Child abuse is any form of physical and/or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity within a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. (WHO, 1999 & 2002)

Physical abuse: actual or potential physical harm perpetrated against a child by another person, adult or child. It may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, drowning and burning. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. This may include, but is not limited to, rape, oral sex, penetration, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching. It may also include involving children in looking at, or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation: a form of sexual abuse that involves children being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. It usually involves a child being manipulated or coerced, which may involve befriending children, gaining their trust, and subjecting them to drugs and alcohol.



Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other nonphysical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Commercial exploitation: exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labor.

Spiritual abuse: occurs when a spiritual leader or someone in a position of spiritual power or authority (whether organization, institution, church or family) misuses their power or authority, and the trust placed in them, with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child. Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can

Abuse of Trust: A trust relationship can be described as one in which one party holds a position of power or influence over the other due to their job or the nature of their activity. Abuse of trust can be committed, for example, by a teacher, humanitarian or development worker, sports coach, scout leader, or religious leader. It is essential that those in positions of trust clearly understand the power this grants them over those in their care and the responsibilities it entails. They must be provided with clear guidelines to ensure they do not abuse their position or place themselves in situations where allegations of abuse, whether justified or not, could be made. Abuse of trust is a factor in all other types of abuse.



3. Document for Distribution: Indicators of Abuse

A child can be subjected to a combination of different types of abuse. It is also possible for a child to show no external signs and hide what is happening to them from everyone.

From Kidscape

- Possible signs of physical abuse
- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away

Possible signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ("I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc ")

Possible signs of neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy
 - Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
 - Personality changes such as becoming insecure
 - Being isolated or withdrawn
 - Inability to concentrate
 - Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
 - Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
 - Becoming worried about clothing being removed
 - Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures

(Sense International Child Protection Policy, section 5.2.1. and 5.2.2.) (ECPAT Australia, Choose with Care, p.34)



SECTION. II. PEOPLE

4. Working with CSC-Asbl

a. Secure recruitment

CSC-Asbl Recruits staff who are committed to the highest child safeguarding standards and its code of conduct, and who are committed to promoting safety and their social well-being.

b. Staff recruitment

- All staff members must provide 3 references: National ID card or equivalent/up-to-date passport, details of any criminal record, and 3 passport photos.
- Respect for the values (Dignity, Humanity and Sharing) and the code of conduct of CSC-Asbl is a contractual requirement for each employee and member of CSC-Asbl.
- Applicants must submit the attached letter with all documents required for recruitment. They may then proceed to an interview once the application is accepted.

c. Training, staff and stakeholder support

Anyone committed to working with CSC-Asbl:

Must undertake a pragmatic empowerment and peace training offered by CSC-Asbl in partnership with Coalition Working with Psycho-trauma and Peace / CWWPP. This training will cover the basics of working with traumatized children with the aim of minimizing the emotional abuse of children by staff members.

- Must undergo child protection training. The aim is to help new members learn the basics of child protection and our safeguarding policy.
- Must be trained on safeguards.
- All children and their guardians with whom we come into direct contact will be briefed on the safeguarding policy in place.

After evaluation, Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl will appoint the person responsible for monitoring the implementation of the safeguarding policy. This person has the duty to analyze the risk mitigation measures before implementation of any program, operation or activity.



d. Training for families and children

This safeguarding policy is written in French and translated into English and Swahili (the language spoken most commonly in eastern DR Congo) and any member or staff of CSC-Asbl is required to train / speak with our direct beneficiaries or indirectly about this document.

Any family members who have concerns to report to our organization should contact the designated person, using the reporting form on the following pages of this document, or use the public reporting link that will be available on the CSC-Asbl website.

We must emphasize that as part of the process of being accountable to our beneficiaries and stakeholders we will consult them and incorporate their feedback before revising this safeguarding policy.



e. Roles and Responsibilities

The Roles	Responsibilities
All employees and representatives (partners)	Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl backup policies are implemented and that backup best practices in terms of prevention and response are integrated into their work.
All Managers	Ensure staff are supported and systems and procedures exist to implement and monitor protection standards.
Human resources	Ensure HR systems to support good protection are in place, including safe recruitment, code of conduct and training. The human resources manager is the leader.
All staff involved in recruitment	Ensure that the recruitment of all employees and representatives of CSC-Asbl complies with the recruitment procedures in force and that all new recruits understand and adhere to the protection policies as part of the integration.
Child safeguarding Person	<p>Ensure that the recruitment of all employees and representatives of CSC-Asbl complies with the recruitment procedures in force and that all new recruits understand and adhere to the protection policies as part of the integration.</p> <p>The responsibility to prevent and report exploitation and abuse is shared. The safeguarding policy needs both a responsible person and a manager to implement the safeguarding standards.</p>
Child safeguarding Case Management Team	A team of senior managers, including the Child Safeguarding Manager, will handle complaints. For our partners, it is the Director and the Head of the organization who will deal with any complaints.



e. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles	Responsibility
Executive management team	Oversee and monitor the implementation of this policy while supporting the development of systems and procedures to meet safeguarding standards. The CEO/Executive Director is the head of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for protection.
Organization and Human Resources Committee	Oversee and monitor the implementation of this policy while supporting the development of systems and procedures to meet safeguarding standards. The CEO/Executive Director is the head of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for protection.
Organization and Human Resources Committee	Board sub-committee responsible for oversight of child safeguarding. The Chairman of the Organization and Human Resources Committee is the Board's dedicated safeguarding representative.
ICT	Takes care of the recording of incidents and directs them to the designated persons, and also focuses on the online protection of children.



5. Commitment and procedure to ensure the safety of children

- We recognize a child as a person under the age of 18,
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is our guideline on the protection of children,
- The safety of children is at the center of our programs, operations and activities,
- We will not overlook or condone any instances of child abuse that we encounter either directly or online in the course of our work,
- Any concerns about the protection of children will be reported following our procedures,
- We will assess the risks with each new program, operation or project activities,
- Our safeguarding policy is shared as widely as possible and we are committed to informing the community about child safety in the local language.

6. Child online safety

Online child protection is a global challenge that requires a comprehensive approach and a worldwide response (ITU). With technological development, children are the most frequent victims. CSC-Asbl is actively committed to ensuring the safety of the children it works with, directly or indirectly, and to achieve this, the following guidelines will be followed.

IMAGES

1. We will respect the dignity of the subject.

- We will always seek permission when taking photographs or video footage of individuals.
- Special consideration will be given to photographs depicting children with disabilities, refugees and those in situations of conflict and disasters, to accurately portray context and maintain dignity.
- Wherever possible, we will explain to the subject the likely use of any images.
- We will never take pictures of people who say they don't want to be photographed.



2. We will not exploit the subject.

- We will not manipulate the subject in a way which distorts the reality of the situation.
- If necessary to protect confidentiality, the names of children and families will be changed. Never will a child's full name or contact details be published.

3. We will maintain standards of taste and decency consistent with our values and those of our supporters.

- We will not use images which are erotic, pornographic or obscene.
- Images of dead or naked bodies will only be used in exceptional circumstances.

4. In disaster situations, we will treat in a positive manner the people we are helping.

- We will treat survivors and victims with empathy, sympathy and compassion.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff or anyone working with CSC-Asbl must not share images that harm the standing or safety of children.

The use of social networks to share the images and information of the activities carried out must be approved by the person responsible for the protection of children (there are basic principles, not to share child sexual abuse material or photos where intimate parts are naked). This principle applies to staff, volunteers, partners or anyone wishing to use the photos of the activities of CSC-Asbl, they must request the permission of the person designated for the protection of the activity.

Staff and volunteers are required to talk to children about potential digital risks and tell them about basic precautions.

Many social media sites require children to be over the age of 13, our organization will not allow such rules to be broken by children it supports.



Rules for personal use of social media by staff and volunteers:

- Always write in the first person and use the disclaimer.
- Never upload or post defamatory, obscene, abusive or harmful content.
- Do not share any sensitive information – name or location of a child or commercially sensitive information.
- Always comply with the site or services terms of use
- You are personally responsible for the content that you share, so always think about what you are posting and sharing.
- Avoid publishing personal information that identifies you.

SECTION. III. PROCEDURES

7. Risk assessment and mitigation strategies

[Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl](#) and all organizations or institutions carrying out work that impacts children in any way, are required to constantly assess the risk that their staff, operations, programs or activities could harm children.

Being members of the Keeping Children Safe (KCS/UK) network in its protection program for child victims and survivors (V/S), CSC-Asbl was guided by the KCS team to develop the risk assessment document and the safeguarding policy in general.

A risk assessment: Is an exercise in which an organization reviews all aspects of its service from a backup perspective, in order to determine whether there are any practices or features of the service likely to endanger children. (Keeping Children Safe)



● **Importance of doing risk assessments**

The importance of assessing the risks of operations, programs and activities in the organization's project plan helps to:

1. Identify possible/potential risks for children,
2. Understand the level of risk for children and
3. Integrate risk mitigation strategies for children into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs and into all activities that involve or have an impact on children.

● **Example of the risk assessment sheet used by CSC-Asbl**

Evaluation de Risaues								
N°	Who is at risk?	What factors put them at risk?	What is the risk?	What controls are in place?	Risk assessment (H, M, L)	What additional agreed controls need to be in place?	By who?	When?
1								

'The team is asked to analyze and answer these questions in order to identify the impact of the project on children and young people.

Community Support Center/CSC-Asbl is required to assess the risks before launching a new program, operation or activity to ensure that mitigation measures are in place for any likely risks.

NB: The detailed document on risk assessment must be requested from the protection officer of the program, operation or activity in progress or by sending an email to childsafeguarding.concern@csc-drc.org with subject (the name of the program, operation or activities). The email must clearly describe the reason for the request.



8: CSC-Asbl Code of Conduct

This code of conduct serves as guidelines to the behaviors that adults must have towards the children that CSC-Asbl works with either directly or indirectly in its operations, programs and activities.

The code of conduct lists the minimum acceptable behaviors and also the unacceptable behaviors or practices of staff members, partners, volunteers, donors and stakeholders who are in direct or indirect contact with children in the context of our work. We emphasize that the list below is not exhaustive.

CSC-Asbl adheres to the principle that all those with whom it works (partners, consultants, staff, volunteers, members of the board of directors etc.) must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom it comes into direct or indirect contact. As persons affiliated with CSC-Asbl, they must avoid actions or behaviors that could constitute bad practice, potentially dangerous or abusive behavior, or any action that is not in the best interests of the child or that could constitute a violation of the rights of the child.

NB: This code of conduct is categorized into two parts but both parts must be read because they contain additional information.

a) To the staff and members of CSC-Asbl

All staff and members are required to:

- Be able to understand the temperaments and support the whims of children,
- Demonstrate empathy and compassion (which are daily practices) towards children within CSC-Asbl,
- Protect children from any abuse or mistreatment,
- Report any mistreatment or abuse caused to children,
- Understand the risk assessment and possible mitigation measures,
- Demonstrate respect - in particular through conduct, and the way of expressing oneself - for the religious beliefs, uses and customs, rules, practices and habits of the inhabitants of the area in which CSC-Asbl carries out the activities,



- Respect others in their private and professional life during and outside of working hours,
- Abstain from any inappropriate behavior, with regard to the specific context of the work of CSC-Asbl,
- Respect the fundamental rights of all human beings without distinction of race, origin, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc,
- Treat people with dignity and respect,
- Establish a relationship of trust with child survivors and victims, one of the ways to help traumatized children,
- Respect the protective measures of the partner organization before going there,
- Guiding children to recognize their rights when they are being abused.

All staff and members are required NOT to:

- Engage in any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, humiliating behavior or abuse (physical, sexual, psychological or verbal), or exploitation, or to in any way violate the rights of the child,
- Take drugs which may impact the work of CSC-Asbl in any manner,
- Expose children (either those CSC-Asbl comes into direct contact with, or those who are impacted by our activities) to abuse in any form,
- Involve the organization in their own privacy issues,
- Tarnish the reputation of CSC-Asbl,
- Accept without verifying any information given by a child,
- Judge without corrupting children,
- Have a relationship contrary to the caregiver-client relationship (Therapeutic) with the children that CSC-Asbl comes into contact with,
- Share information that could put children at risk.

NB: Violating this principle will lead to an investigation and transfer of the file to the competent authorities.



b) To the stakeholders (partners, volunteers, donors, visitors, etc.) of CSC-Asbl

During visits to the partner organizations, volunteers, donors, (all stakeholders) of CSC-Asbl, must adhere to this child safeguarding policy and the code of conduct relating thereto throughout the duration of the visit. The staff of CSC-Asbl must always consider the implications of this document.

All our stakeholders are required to:

- Treat each child with dignity and as a unique and valuable human being with distinct individual personality, needs, interests and privacy, with due regard to the child's right to participation,
- Ensure the protection of children in all modes of contact (direct or indirect),
- Always conduct child protection risk assessments in the context of activities, operations and programs,
- Empower children: educate them about their rights, what is acceptable adult behavior towards them, what is inappropriate or unacceptable, and what they can do if some untoward event occurs,
- Accept that each child has their own personal experience and should be treated with dignity,
- Promote a climate of peace and well-being for all children.

All our stakeholders are required not to:

- Take part in any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying or activities that expose the child to the possibility of harm,
- Act in such a way that their reactions are abusive or endanger children,
- Treat children like objects,
- Physically or emotionally abuse children,
- Engage in sexual activity or have sex with a child,
- Expose children to inappropriate images, movies, music, indecent / pornographic images,
- Allow allegations or complaints made by a child or concerns raised about their welfare to go unrecorded.

NB: Violating this principle will lead to an investigation and transfer of the file to the competent authorities.



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c)Declaration of adherence to the code of conduct form

To our partners, donors, volunteers and all stakeholders who would like to intervene in one way or another in activities, operations, programs that directly involve children, you are all required to read and approve this code of conduct and the policy. of child safeguarding by filling out this online form <https://forms.gle/tzXsj1auM7yVee6h9> and our team will acknowledge receipt of your declaration.

For activities carried out directly in the field, all persons who are involved in activities and who have not completed the online form must read the code of conduct, complete the form below and return it to the designated manager

I, the undersigned:

Full name:

.....

Gender.....ID N°.....

Organization:.....

Job Title.....

I agree I have read carefully and will adhere to this code of conduct and the safeguarding policy of CSC-Asbl.

Place and date : / /20.....

Your Name and signature below:



SECTION. IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

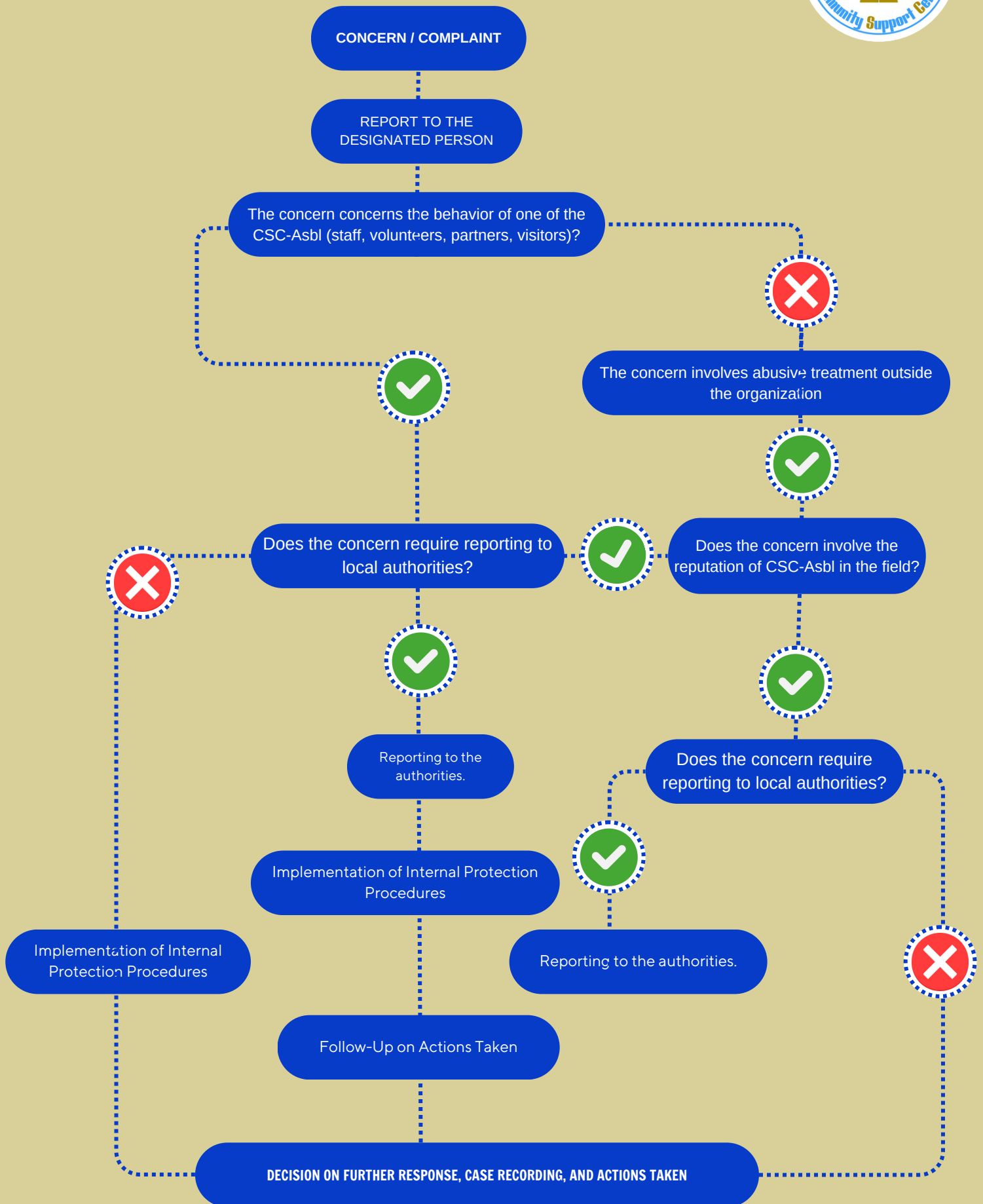
9. Reporting and response procedures

If you are concerned or know that a child's safety may be at risk, send the information to the best of your knowledge. Please note that child safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported directly to the designated child protection person.

You may wish to send the report before contacting the designated child protection person or you may wish to complete the report after contacting the designated child protection person, depending on the best interests of the child.

For reasons of confidentiality, the report must be written and signed only by the person who writes it. It should be given exclusively to the designated child protection person or the next most appropriate person. The Child Safeguarding and Welfare Report should be kept in a safe and secure place and treated with the strictest confidentiality.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES



Adapted Procedure from the Keeping Children Safe Model



10. Conclusion

This document must be consulted when setting up a new program or operation and when developing projects that have a direct or indirect impact on children. It is recommended that all members, volunteers, and stakeholders who come into contact with children in the course of CSC-Asbl activities have a copy of this document.

11. Acknowledgements

- To the CSC-Asbl team which has taken on the task of analyzing and aligning this document in the context of CSC-Asbl's work,
- To the partner organization Keeping Children Safe / KCS which trained the staff of Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl on the development of safeguarding policy,
- Our sincere thanks to Valentina Mirabolano and Samuel Gordon for accompanying us throughout the development of this document.
- Our gratitude goes to Seymour Hosking and Doreen Hosking who helped us with the translation of the document (French-English).
- To all of our donors who contribute in one way or another to help us achieve our mission and vision.

Annex 1. Complete Risk Assessment Document

Annex 2. Consent Form



Useful links

- Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

- Keeping Children Safe

<https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global>

- International guarantees for children in sport

<https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/media/implementation-guide-for-anyone-supporting-or-governing-organisations-working-with-children-a5-version-re.pdf>

- Community Support Center / CSC-Asbl's website

www.csc-rdc.org