

# Trócaire

## Child Safeguarding Policy – Ireland and Northern Ireland

### Version Control

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# 1 POLICY STATEMENT

Trócaire's work is inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, one of the fundamental principles of which is the dignity of each individual. The right to freedom from all forms of exploitation and abuse is implicit in this principle. Underpinned by the organisational value of accountability, it is our policy to safeguard all individuals involved in Trócaire's work against risks of exploitation and abuse.

Trócaire particularly recognises that the need to protect children is of paramount importance. The vulnerability of children to abuse is increased by many factors, including poverty, inequality, violence, cultural practices and humanitarian crises. Children who are exploited and abused are more likely to suffer long-term consequences, including mental health issues, reduced educational outcomes, drug and alcohol abuse and increased likelihood of breaking the law. Trócaire is committed to doing what it can to safeguard those children with whom it interacts, either directly or indirectly (e.g., through the activities of public engagement and fundraising), so that they can avail of their right to grow up in safety.

## 1.1 Scope

The scope of this policy document relates to the safeguarding and protection of children with whom Trócaire staff and other personnel may come into contact with while working on Trócaire's Ireland and Northern Ireland work and activities.

This policy applies to:

- all Trócaire employees based in Ireland and Northern Ireland
- all Trócaire volunteers based in Ireland and Northern Ireland
- employees based in overseas offices, when visiting Ireland and/or Northern Ireland
- representatives working under a contractual arrangement with or on behalf of Trócaire, e.g. consultants or other third parties;
- any other official visitor to Trócaire programmes e.g. supporters, donors, journalists, volunteers.

This policy does not apply directly to Trócaire's partners or organisations that may undertake activities / fundraising for Trócaire. We do however expect that others will share our commitment to keeping children safe. It is also a minimum requirement of funding that partner organisations share a commitment to implement child safeguarding standards and develop their own policies and procedures to prevent and respond to risks of exploitation and abuse of children in all their activities, including projects in receipt of funding from Trócaire.

## 1.2 Commitment

Trócaire strongly believes all children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Trócaire recognises that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and is committed to

make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected in all Trócaire's work and activities. Trócaire's aim is to ensure that it operates best practice in terms of child safeguarding policies and recognises the legal guidelines governing protection in each jurisdiction in which it works.

Trócaire does not tolerate the abuse or exploitation of children committed by any of its employees, volunteers, consultants, or other third parties acting on behalf of the organisation. Allegations of child abuse will result in mandatory reporting of incidents to the relevant authorities and if founded may lead to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal. All employees, volunteers, consultants and other third parties must comply with this policy and ensure all procedures regarding child protection are implemented in full.

### **1.3 Guiding Documents and Principles**

Our approach to child safeguarding work is guided by a number of key national and international principles and standards as set out in the following:

#### **International law, policy and guidance**

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), The UNCRC is ratified in 193 states (except Somalia, South Sudan and the United States)<sup>1</sup>. The four general principles of the UNCRC are:
  - Survival and development,
  - Non-discrimination,
  - Child participation and the right to be heard,
  - Best interests of the child.

Of the 54 articles contained within the UNCRC, the most relevant statements to the current policy are detailed below:

Article 2: Children have the right to protection against discrimination.

Article 3: All adults should always do what is best for a child.

Article 12: Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

#### **Republic of Ireland law, policy and guidance**

- Children First Act, 2015
- Better Outcomes Better Futures, DCYA, 2014
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, DYCA 2011

- Criminal Justice Act, 2006
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998
- Child Care Act, 1991
- The Constitution of Ireland

#### **Northern Ireland law, policy and guidance**

- Safeguarding Board Act (NI), 2011
- Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Now), 2011
- Our Children and Young People: Our Pledge, 2006
- Cooperating to Safeguard Children, 2003
- Children (NI) Order, 1995
- Criminal Law Act (NI), 1967

In the laws of both jurisdictions (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland), where there is a conflict between the best interest of the child and the interests of other parties, the best interests of the child are considered to have paramourty.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Policy Document**

This document is set out in a manner that it should provide clear guidance to all Managers, other Trócaire staff, and third parties regarding their responsibilities in safeguarding and protecting children while they are working with Trócaire in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Section 1 of the document sets out Trócaire's clear commitment to safeguarding children and it sets out in general terms benchmarks within which it has set its safeguarding standards.

Section 2 sets out a set of 7 standards which, when fully implemented, will ensure that Trócaire is meeting the highest standards in child safeguarding. In addition, the standards are set out in a manner that allows Trócaire to easily monitor progress in the implementation of good safeguarding practice.

Section 3 focuses primarily on striving to ensure that cases of abuse do not arise by having robust safeguarding systems in place.

Section 4 focuses on what staff are expected to do when an issue arises, clearly setting out the roles and responsibilities of staff. In addition it is also made clear that staff are not alone and that, when the need arises, there are systems in place to provide support and advice. At the same time, the specific responsibilities of staff, particularly in relation to their duty to report, is clearly set out.

#### **1.5 Definitions & Terminology**

In this document the term Safeguarding pertains to the prevention of harm to children, while the term Protection relates to the response and support mechanisms that are in place should an allegation and/or incident of abuse arise. Trócaire considers a child or young person to be under the age of 18 years.

**Child Abuse** is considered under the following headings:

**Physical abuse** is actual or likely physical injury to a child such as hitting, kicking or shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

**Emotional abuse** is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples may include: conditional parenting, exposure to violence, inappropriate or abusive material, under or over-protection, or emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer

**Neglect** can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and the failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect refers to the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and /or psychological needs as referred to in the UNCRC.

***Note:** Neglect as defined above is prevalent in many countries where Trócaire works due to severe poverty and/or a lack of appropriate social structures and not by intentional abuse by an individual. Applying this definition must take this into consideration and be contextualised to specific situations. Trócaire aims to help reduce poverty and improve conditions of life for people.*

**Sexual abuse and exploitation** occurs when an individual uses a child for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include, sexual intercourse with a child, intentional touching or molesting of a child, exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification in the presence of a child, sexual exploitation of a child including forcing, encouraging, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution. For the purpose of Trócaire's policy, as we work across different jurisdictions, **Consensual Sexual activity** that occurs between an individual and a child/youth under the age of 18<sup>1</sup> is not acceptable in any circumstance, regardless of whether he/she may consent or if the individual is unaware of the child's/youth's age. This is irrespective of the age of consent in the residing country. It includes the inappropriate use of technology and social media; e.g., the storage or dissemination of pornography, the recording or sharing abusive images using technology such as via mobile phone texting, audio, video, images, podcasts, social networking websites and other multimedia or communications platforms.

<sup>1</sup> As Trócaire works in countries where the age of consent varies greatly, Trócaire's policy outlines the age for Consensual Sexual Activity at 18 (in keeping with the definition of a child being under the age of 18)

## 2 STANDARDS OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Trócaire is committed to achieving the highest level of protection for children with whom it comes into contact; its work will be guided by the following set of standards. These standards draw upon the principles outlined in international and regional child rights instruments and commitments. Though the achievement of the standards may sometimes be influenced by factors beyond our control, we commit ourselves to work consistently towards achieving them. It should be noted also that adherence to the standards is achieved through the implementation of a range of relevant policies that Trócaire has in place, which complement and strengthen the organisation’s overall capacity to provide a safe environment for children<sup>2</sup>. The standards have been written in a way that makes them relevant and achievable. In all, Trócaire will apply 7 safeguarding standards:

- Standard 1: Creating Safe Environments
- Standard 2: Responding to allegations, suspicions and concerns
- Standard 3: Caring for people involved in a complaint
- Standard 4: Communicating the “keeping children safe” message
- Standard 5: Education and training for keeping children safe
- Standard 6: Implementing and monitoring of the standards
- Standard 7: Working in Partnership

### 2.1 Standard 1: Creating Safe Environments

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 1 are as follows:

- There are agreed procedures for recruiting staff, volunteers, consultants and assessing their suitability to work with Trócaire
- There are written guidelines for appropriate/expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children
- Trócaire encourages a culture where children are listened to and respected as individuals
- There are clear ways by which Trócaire staff or other representatives can raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other staff or representatives (including a complaints procedure and a whistle blowing policy)
- There is effective practice for staff on assessments of hazards when working with children
- Projects and programmes make sure that children are adequately supervised and protected when this is relevant in the context of Trócaire’s work
- Trócaire implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology including social media

#### Evidence of adherence to Standard 1

Evidence	Checked
A clear and appropriate recruitment policy	
HR record showing adherence to the recruitment policy in appointing staff and other representatives	

<sup>2</sup>These include the Whistle Blowing Policy, the Code of Conduct for staff, and the Dignity at Work Policy. See Annex E for a full list.

Evidence the recruiting personnel are appropriately trained	
Records of staff signing the Code of Conduct	
Procedure for addressing breaches in Code of Conduct	
Whistle blowing policy	
Complaints procedures	
Policy on the use of the internet and social media	
Risk assessments for working with children	

## 2.2 Standard 2: Responding to allegations, suspicions and concerns

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 2 are as follows:

- There are clear child protection procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child’s safety or welfare.
- The child protection procedures are available to everyone (including children, parents/carers). Consideration is given to making sure that the information provided is easily understandable.
- The child protection procedures are consistent with national and international standards and good practice in the protection of children.
- There is a person or persons with clearly defined responsibility for managing allegations of abuse.
- There is a process for recording incidents, concerns and referrals, as well as systems to ensure this confidential information can be securely stored.
- There is a process for dealing with allegations by parents/carers and by young people about unacceptable and/or abusive behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.
- There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.

### Evidence of adherence to Standard 2

Evidence	Checked
A copy of written procedures	
A flow chart that describes steps in the process of response to reports or allegations of exploitation or abuse.	
Names and duties of those people with special responsibility for child protection at the country office level	
Examples of forms for recording details of child protection incidents	

## 2.3 Standard 3: Caring for people involved in a complaint

Trócaire believes it has a duty to ensure advice and support is available to help people to play their part in protecting children.

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 3 are as follows:

- Information about where to go for help and advice in relation to child abuse is available in Trócaire’s offices

- Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection
- In each office contacts have been established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies that can provide information, support and assistance to Trócaire staff.
- Systems are in place to provide support to relevant individuals (including staff, victims and accused) during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint.

Evidence of adherence to Standard 3

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checked</b>
Information on identified support systems and key contact people	
Information about training, advice and support for staff and other relevant people, including children.	
List of contact for specialist advice and information, including on reporting	

**2.4 Standard 4: Communicating the “keep children safe” message**

Trócaire believes that the effectiveness of its policy and procedures on child safeguarding and protection will best be realised if its stakeholders are aware of them, can contribute to their implementation and provide feedback.

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 4 are as follows:

- Information about Trócaire’s commitment to keeping children safe is openly displayed and available to the public.
- Where Trócaire is working with children, they are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse
- Information and advice for children/parents/guardians, in understandable format, about where to go for help in relation to child abuse is available in Trócaire’s offices/centres
- Everybody in Trócaire knows who has responsibility for child safeguarding and how to contact them.

Evidence of adherence to Standard 4

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checked</b>
Published information setting out Trócaire’s commitment to keeping children safe	
Clear information about who are the key personnel responsible for child safeguarding at the office level, including contact details	

## 2.5 Standard 5: Education and Training for keeping children safe

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 5 are as follows:

- All staff, volunteers and other associates are inducted to Trócaire’s Child Safeguarding Policy when they join Trócaire. All relevant personnel will also be provided with some training on child safeguarding procedures.
- All staff are provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to concerns about child abuse
- Where relevant, children are provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe (e.g. During overnight events organised by Trócaire)
- Staff members with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have relevant training and regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge
- Training is provided to those responsible for managing allegations in relation to child abuse and inappropriate behaviour towards children
- Training and written guidance will be provided for staff responsible for specific aspects of creating safe environments (e.g. recruitment)

### Evidence of adherence to Standard 5

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checked</b>
A copy of training plans and programme content	
Records of course attendance	
Course evaluations	

## 2.6 Standard 6: Implementing and monitoring of standards

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 6 are as follows:

- There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementation and when they will be completed.
- The human and financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available
- Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals (at least every three years) and revised according to identified needs.
- All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are responded to in line with the approved systems and records are maintained.
- Monitoring of compliance of with Trócaire’s Child Safeguarding policy is carried out on a regular basis by the designated officer.

### Evidence of adherence to Standard 6

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Checked</b>
A written copy of the Child Safeguarding Policy is available in each centre	
A copy of the monitoring plan and reports of past monitoring exercises are available in each centre	

A record of any child abuse-related incident that occurred, how it was handled and the outcome is stored in a central confidential location.	
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## 2.7 Working in Partnership

Civil Authorities: Trócaire complies with current legislation including reporting of allegations, concerns and suspicions. Trócaire will work in partnership, on the basis of advice from relevant authorities as required.

Other organisations / Partners: Throughout our work in Ireland and Northern Ireland Trócaire works with or involves contact with other organisations (including schools, voluntary organisations etc). In working with all external organisations Trócaire works in partnership to ensure that the welfare and safety of children is a priority.

### Evidence of adherence to Standard 7

Evidence	Checked
Evident of reporting to and engagement with relevant civil authorities	
Evident of linking with other organisations to share policies and practices and our requirements that others share our commitments	

### 3 PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

In order to ensure that this policy is implemented and that steps are taken to protect children, a number of procedures are in place to encourage a culture of safety and to prevent harm to children in the course of carrying out Trócaire's work.

#### 3.1 Safe Recruitment

Trócaire ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of employees and representatives, to ensure that issues relating to safeguarding children are considered and addressed. The following have special considerations with reference to child safeguarding:

- **Job Advertisements:** a note should be included in all job advertisements to highlight that Trócaire aims to protect children against risks of exploitation and abuse, and implements a Child Safeguarding Policy to support this.
- **Job Description:** Child Safeguarding is referenced in all job descriptions and applies to all employees and representatives.
- **Interview:** questions in relation to Child Safeguarding should be included in all interviews. It is not expected that all new recruits would have an in depth knowledge of Child Safeguarding unless it is a specific requirement of the role. However, it is important that all candidates are aware of Trócaire's commitment to safeguarding children and the expectation that all employees recognise, report and respond to incidents of child exploitation and abuse.
- **Reference Checks** A thorough check of employment references is carried out and includes a question in relation to safeguarding, e.g. "Trócaire aims to protect all children involved in Trócaire's work against risks of exploitation and abuse - do you have any reason to deem this person unsuitable to work with children or adults who may be vulnerable?".
- **Self-Declaration:** This is attached to the Child Safeguarding Policy (see Annex B) and is a process through which candidates are asked to declare any prosecutions pending against them, convictions of criminal offences, official cautions or other legally binding orders. This should be completed before contracts are signed.
- **Contract:** The Child Safeguarding Policy for Ireland/Northern Ireland, Code of Conduct, Policy Declaration Form and (where relevant) Vetting Form are attached to all contracts and sent to all new employees or representatives before commencing work with Trócaire.
- **Police Clearance/Vetting:** A procedure through which the national police authorities are required, with the individual's permission, to disclose any information held on police file regarding criminal convictions or pending prosecutions. It is considered best practice that all employees and third parties with direct access to children through their work are vetted. Trócaire recognises that this is not always possible in each country where it works. However, each country office will have to assess local context and procedures to determine what is feasible.

Detailed information with regard to child safeguarding is integrated into Trócaire's Recruitment Procedures (*Trócaire's Recruitment Procedure is available on Yammer.*) All employees responsible for recruiting employees and/or selecting Trócaire representatives must read, understand and apply the revisions documented in this policy.

### **3.2 Code of Conduct**

Trócaire's Code of Conduct expresses the expectations of Trócaire for all employees, volunteers, consultants and third parties regarding the conduct and manner in which activities are carried out. It is an integral component of Safeguarding which forms part of the contractual terms and conditions of all Trócaire employees and representatives contracted to work with or for Trócaire.

By signing the Code of Conduct, each employee or third party commits to:

- work actively to promote the best interests of children and adults
- act in line with Trócaire's Child Safeguarding Policy and relevant guides
- encourage children and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like and make a complaint where necessary
- one to one situations with children should be avoided and that caution and risk assessments are required for one-to-one situations,.

(Examples of unacceptable behaviour are listed in Annex F)

### **3.3 Work Placements Students & Youth Volunteers**

Trócaire recognises the valuable opportunity that having a work placement student creates. While giving the student valuable workplace experience it also offers a great opportunity for Trócaire to share with the student some of the many issues happening for people throughout the world and hopefully it will be a positive part of the students learning and thought development.

However, as the students are often under 18 years, we do have responsibilities under 'Children First Guidelines and Child Safeguarding'. Therefore in advance of any student placement a risk assessment will be conducted.

Similar Trócaire also recognises the significant contribution of volunteers who participant in and support our work. However, when volunteers are under 18 years, we do have responsibilities under 'Children First Guidelines and Child Safeguarding'. Therefore in advance of any volunteering activity (for volunteers under 18 years) a risk assessment will be conducted.

### **3.4 Awareness and Training**

Trócaire recognises that raising awareness and providing appropriate training are crucial for improving child safeguarding practices. It is essential that all employees are aware of the child safeguarding standards and their obligations to implement them. Depending on the role of each employee, different levels of training are provided. However, at a minimum, all are introduced to the safeguarding policy during induction and ongoing refresher workshops and/or training about conduct. Trócaire also commits to widely communicating the safeguarding message.

The following initiatives are either in place or being developed to ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the Safeguarding Policy:

- Trócaire’s induction programme for all new employees covers the Child Safeguarding Policy
- All employees and representatives receive information on the relevance and impact of the Child Safeguarding Policy and accompanying guidance documents on their work
- A Child Protection Designated Officer has been identified with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for in responding to accusations or incidents of child
- Trócaire’s Stakeholder Accountability Framework highlights child safeguarding as well as other commitments in relation to how we intend to be accountable to all stakeholders
- Communication materials about the Child Safeguarding Policy in offices/centres, such as posters, will contain the following information: the child safeguarding message, a summary of the code of conduct or behaviour to be expected from Trócaire staff or representatives and how to make a complaint about exploitation and abuse
- All relevant documentation for the Child Safeguarding Policy, accompanying guides and forms will be accessible on Trócaire’s Yammer platform

### **3.5 Risk Assessment and Safe Activities**

Child safeguarding considerations such as exploitation and abuse should be included in all risk assessments to ensure that all activities are conducted in a safe and dignified manner. Where it has been identified that activities involve children then a Safe Activities checklist must be completed and relevant safeguards implemented

Further details of risk assessment and safe activities considerations can be found in the accompanying staff guide.

### **3.6 Special Considerations for Recording Stories and Images**

Trócaire applies the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (<http://www.dochas.ie/code/>) regarding the use of images (photographic/film or other) and information about Trócaire’s work and participants. The following guidelines should be adhered to (further details can be found in the accompanying employee guide):

- Ask the participant’s parent’s/guardian’s permission to take the photograph/image
- Individuals must be appropriately dressed according to their choice and country of origin
- Any complaints or concerns about inappropriate or intrusive images should be reported and recorded.
- The recorded images should focus on an activity and, where possible, feature groups of children rather than individuals.
- Make sure that photographers and filmmakers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to children without supervision.

When publishing images:

- Try to use images that represent a broad range of people, gender, age groups, abilities and ethnic groups.
- Only use first names of children; be careful not to reveal too much detail about where children live, their school or their hobbies.
- For Ireland and Northern Ireland, get adult / parent / guardian’s consent, preferably written, to use images and inform them of the purpose, where and how the images will be used.
- For overseas images only use those that have been approved through the Communications Department
- Seek advice about publishing images on a website and always ensure time is allowed to edit images before they are uploaded.

### **3.7 Partner Selection and Support**

Trócaire takes appropriate steps when selecting and working with partners to ensure that there is a shared commitment to implement minimum safeguarding standards and that the organisation takes appropriate measures to uphold these standards. One of the Minimum Requirements for partnership funding, reproduced below, is that the partner organisation have in place, or is committed to producing within a specified period of time, a policy for child protecting in its activities.

*‘The partner organisation has a policy or a statement of commitment regarding the safeguarding of programme participants (including children), staff, volunteers and other third parties working on their behalf against any form of exploitation or abuse’.*

### **3.8 Contractual Agreements**

Trócaire employees, volunteers and consultants:

All people who are contracted to work with or for Trócaire are required to understand and sign a policy declaration for this policy and Trócaire’s Code of Conduct (see Annex B) and complete a Self-Declaration Form about previous convictions (see Annex C), which form part of the terms and conditions of the contract. Failure to comply with this policy by a Trócaire employee may lead to corrective action being taken under Trócaire’s Disciplinary Procedures. Failure to comply with this policy by a Trócaire representative may lead to termination of a contract.

## 4 REPORTING, RESPONDING AND MONITORING

### 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

All involved in Trócaire’s work have a shared responsibility to recognise, report and respond to exploitation and abuse. The table below gives an overview of the key responsibilities, all of which are expanded on in the employee guide.

#### Within Trócaire

Role	Responsibility
All employees & representatives	To ensure that the Policy on Child Safeguarding and is implemented and that safeguarding best practice in terms of prevention and response is incorporated into their work.
All Managers	To ensure that staff are supported and systems and procedures exist to implement and monitor safeguarding standards.
Human Resources and any staff involved in recruitment	To ensure that the recruitment of all Trócaire employees and representatives is in line with the current Recruitment Procedures and that all new recruits understand and sign up to the Policy as part of induction.
Head of Department	Ensure that the department has systems and procedures in place which are in line with the Policy to prevent and respond to issues or complaints as they arise, including those which need to be escalated to the Chief Safeguarding Officer.
Global Safeguarding Advisor & Chief Designated Officer	To drive the implementation of Safeguarding Policy and Practice throughout the organisation. Act as Advisor for all staff on all aspects of safeguarding. To receive and manage allegations from start to finish, including onward referral both internally and externally as appropriate.
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	To keep oversight and monitor the implementation of this policy while supporting the development of systems and procedures to meet safeguarding standards.
Chief Safeguarding Officer	The Chief Safeguarding Officer is the ELT member responsible for the overseeing of safeguarding within Trócaire. (This role is currently filled by the Head of Human Resources).

#### Civil Authorities

Role	Responsibility
An Garda Síochána / PSNI	To investigate and establish if a crime has been committed. They will Liaise directly with the Designated Officer as appropriate.
Tusla	To promote the welfare of children in the Republic of Ireland who are not receiving adequate care and protection. They will Liaise directly with the Designated Officer as appropriate.
HSCT	To assess risk to children in Northern Ireland. They will Liaise directly with the Designated Officer as appropriate.

## **4.2 Recognising Exploitation & Abuse**

It is crucial that all Trócaire staff who may work with children recognise that exploitation and abuse of children in any form whether physical, sexual, emotional or neglect is unacceptable and will be acted upon once we are aware of it. All employees and representatives are expected to know how to respond should a concern be raised with them.

## **4.3 Duty to Report**

All Trócaire employees and representatives have a mandatory duty to report any suspected incident of exploitation or abuse of a child to the Child Protection Designated Officer (Global Safeguarding Advisor). Failure to report such matters may result in disciplinary action. Staff should follow the steps as outlined in section 4.5 below – Guidance for staff who receive a complaint.

It should be noted that abuse may be current, recent or historical. There are no time constraints for reporting and taking action within the remit of this procedure, although Trócaire encourages that reports be made as soon as knowledge, or suspicion, of an act of exploitation or abuse occurs.

Trócaire is committed to ensuring that adherence to confidentiality, in the management of complaints and allegations of exploitation and abuse, is strictly maintained.

Trócaire will endeavour to protect all individuals in reporting, provided the allegations are made reasonably and in good faith, in line with Trócaire's Whistle Blowing Policy. Malicious complaints<sup>3</sup> made against an individual, if these are proven, will result in appropriate corrective action under the Disciplinary Procedure up to and including dismissal.

## **4.4 Responding to Reports or Allegations**

Trócaire will take whatever action is appropriate, necessary and possible, without risk of further harm to any individual and to ensure the safety of those involved. Each case will be considered individually and in accordance with national legalisation.

In Ireland and Northern Ireland, Trócaire recognises that when specific reports or allegations (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) of abuse are made, this will always be referred to the civil authorities for investigation and acted upon swiftly, making the welfare of children the paramount consideration (see 4.1 above). Any information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people in authority: this would include members of the senior management team if appropriate, child protection personnel in civil authorities. Parents, carers or schools will also be informed if it is appropriate for Trócaire to do so.

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<sup>3</sup> The term malicious implies the conscious misuse of the system to harm somebody. A false complaint can be based on a misunderstanding and be of good faith by the complainant (whistle-blowing).

If the allegation/complaint relates to a Trócaire employee, they will be informed of the allegation/complaint/suspicion and the external reporting requirements that must be followed by the organisation. The employee will also be informed of any decision to remove or suspend them from any or all duties or duties that involve working with children. This decision will be made using the guiding principle that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration.

Procedures will be conducted in accordance with national guidelines. If necessary, following the completion of any external investigations, Trócaire will conduct its own internal investigation to assess whether a breach of organisation policy has occurred. If founded, a breach of policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

All internal investigations will be conducted in accordance with Trócaire's Investigation Procedure and any corrective action will be taken under Trócaire's Disciplinary Procedure up to and including dismissal of an employee, or termination of a contract with a volunteer, consultant or third party. Trócaire does not have the right to interview any child or external parties with regard to a complaint of child abuse in any internal investigation procedure.

#### **4.5 Guidance for staff who receive a Complaint**

All Trócaire employees, representatives and official visitors have a **mandatory duty to report** any suspected incident of exploitation or abuse (both current and historical) of an individual(s) immediately. Reports may relate to, but not be limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual exploitation and abuse or neglect.

**It is not, however, the role of an individual staff member to investigate beyond the need to ensure that any report of an incident is accurate and is sufficiently detailed to be the basis for a decision regarding next steps to be taken.**

#### **Actions to be taken when a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse is received:**

- Respond immediately to any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- Refer all information to the CPDO as soon as possible
- The CPDO will assess the information and will follow up the matter with the civil authorities.
- Wherever possible take notes, if not immediately as soon as possible, but not later than the end of that day
- Record all information on the Trócaire child protection form (see Annex D). This should be signed and dated by the author.
- Include all of the details, even those which may not appear important at the time
- The CPDO will compile a child protection case file and will store all original copies of information in a safe and secure location
- Assess the risk to the child/children in question and if you deem it to be urgent, check that the CPDO has addressed the matter with the urgency you believe it deserves
- Maintain professional confidentiality at all times.

### **How to respond to a person bringing a report on possible abuse or exploitation**

Receive:	Listen, believe
Reassure:	Make no promises, but communicate that what is being reported is not the fault of the child. Communicate no judgement.
React:	Be non-intrusive, ask open questions, remain calm
Record:	Contemporaneous notes (observable /verifiable facts)
Remember:	The child safeguarding guidelines (and training you have received)

#### **4.6 Monitoring of Child Protection Systems**

It is important that compliance with this policy and the implementation of safeguarding standards is monitored on an ongoing basis. The following procedures should be observed as a minimum:

- All reports will be logged and stored in a secure location e.g. locked cabinet/drawer with restricted access, password protected files accessed by CPDO/HR.
- Review of safeguarding will form part of Trócaire’s Internal Audit process
- Trócaire will regularly monitor reports and the types of complaints received regarding safeguarding of programme participants and partners through the Executive Leadership Team.
- An Annual Statement on safeguarding, highlighting key issues will be presented to Trócaire’s Board of Directors and Trustees and referred to in Trócaire’s Annual Report as appropriate.
- Trócaire’s policy is reviewed and approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.
- Trócaire’s Child Safeguarding Policy - Ireland and Northern Ireland will approved by Trócaire’s Senior Management Team and will be reviewed every three years.

**Annex A: Declaration Form**

*The following declaration must be signed by all Trócaire employees and volunteers based in Ireland/Northern Ireland offices. This forms part of the terms and conditions of all contractual agreements with anyone associated with the implementation of Trócaire’s work overseas.*

Please complete the following declaration and return HR Representative.

***I have read and fully understand the following:***

- ***Trócaire Child Safeguarding Policy***
- ***Trócaire Code of Conduct***

***I agree to accept and apply the above Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct in their entirety.***

***Signed:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Name in caps:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Title:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Date:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***For HR Only***

***Received by:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Received on:*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Annex B: Self-Declaration Form**

In order to comply with Trócaire’s Child Safeguarding Policy, this form must be completed and signed by all employees, volunteers, consultants and third parties working with Trócaire Ireland / Northern Ireland

**Full Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been charged or convicted of a criminal offence relating to the exploitation or abuse of a child or adult.  
Yes  No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Date of offence: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of offence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures, or have left or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards children? (Please tick)

Yes  No

If yes, please give details including date(s) below:

Name of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of incident(s)/inappropriate behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

Declaration:

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that Trócaire will keep this information securely in accordance with Data Protection legislation. I hereby declare the information I have provided above is accurate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For HR Only*

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Received on: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex C: Summary Statement**

Name of Visitor:	Country Visiting:
Trócaire Staff Liaison:	Date Received:

### **Child Safeguarding Policy**

#### **Summary Policy Statement**

All individuals have the right to life with dignity and to absolute freedom from exploitation and abuse. Underpinned by Trócaire’s organisational value of accountability, it is our policy to safeguard all individuals involved in Trócaire’s work against risks of exploitation and abuse. Trócaire will not tolerate exploitative or abusive behaviour by anyone associated with the implementation of Trócaire’s work and highlights this as a core commitment in the organisations’ Stakeholder Accountability Framework. Trócaire recognises that individuals, women, men, girls and boys in certain contexts may be considered more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse than others, and we make every effort to eliminate such risks from our programmes.

**Trócaire’s Child Safeguarding Policy applies to:** all Trócaire employees and volunteers based with Trócaire in Ireland / Northern Ireland. It also applies to representatives working under a contractual arrangement with or on behalf of Trócaire, e.g., consultants and other third parties.

An integral component of the Policy is **Trócaire’s Code of Conduct** which forms part of any contractual terms and conditions of all Trócaire employees and representatives contracted to work with or for Trócaire. Special considerations are made to safeguard children. In line with this, all commit:

- To work actively to promote the best interests of children and adults
- To act in line with Trócaire’s Safeguarding Policies and relevant guides
- To encourage children and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like and make a complaint where necessary
- To recognise that caution is required in one-to-one situations, particularly in sensitive situations such as dealing with programme participants including children who may be upset or traumatised

Trócaire has a zero-tolerance stance on exploitative and abusive relationships, including:

- Any sexual activity with children under the age of 18, regardless of the age of consent locally (mistaken belief of age being no defence)
- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to partners and programme participants.

**It is expected that visitors of Trócaire adhere to these commitments when interacting with children.**

**Annex D: Incident Report Form**

*This form should be completed if you have a suspicion or concern regarding an abuse of a child or a breach of Trócaire's Child Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct and given to the Child Protection Designated Officer.*

**Section 1:**

**About the disclosure/concern**

Date of disclosure/concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of disclosure/concern: \_\_\_\_\_

How was the information received? (Attach any written information to this form)

*Please circle:*

Telephone                  Letter                  Email                  In person

**Details of person making disclosure/raising concern**

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of child**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnic Origin \_\_\_\_\_

Language (is interpreter/signer needed) Yes  No  Any Disability \_\_\_\_\_

School (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**School / Partner / Other Organisation details (if relevant)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint?

Yes  No

**Details of parent/carer (where appropriate)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint?**

Yes  No

**Details of alleged perpetrator**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child or adult (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of concern, allegation or complaint**

**(Include dates/times, location of incident(s) occurred, witnesses if known. Include programme participant's words where possible. Does the child or adult know this concern is being raised?)**

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Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: To be completed by the Child Safeguarding Designated Officer.**

**Action taken:**

Has the matter been referred to civil /church / community authorities?

Yes  No

If no explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes

Date of referral \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Who was it referred to?**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Designation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Steps**

What actions were agreed and by whom when the matter was referred to civil / church / community authority?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Are there any immediate protection concerns? If so please record what they are and state what actions have been taken by whom to address them?

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**Child Safeguarding Designated Officer**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Annex E: List of Relevant and Related Policy and Procedural Documents**

- Trócaire Position Statement on exploitation and abuse, including zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse
- Trócaire Programme Participant Safeguarding Policy
- Trócaire Child Safeguarding Policy - Ireland and Northern Ireland – Staff Guide
- Trócaire Child Safeguarding Policy – International Programmes
- Trócaire Child Safeguarding Policy - International Programmes – Staff Guide: This is an integral part of the policy, providing information and guidance to assist employees to put the commitments outlined within this policy into practice
- Trócaire Child Safeguarding Policy - International Programmes – Partner Guide: a specific guide outlining minimum requirements and contractual obligations for partner organisations
- Trócaire Stakeholder Accountability Framework
- Trócaire Global Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy & Procedures
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Discipline and Grievance Procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Investigation Procedures
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Dóchas Guide to Conduct on Images and Media <http://www.dochas.ie/code/>
- Humanitarian Protection Policy & Handbook
- Gender Mainstreaming Resource Pack
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989),

## **Annex F: Some examples of unacceptable behaviour in relation to working with children**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive in any way or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from and their line manager.
- Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working.
- Sleep in the same room as a child with whom they are working unless exceptional circumstances apply and previous permission has been obtained from the child(ren)'s parents/guardians and the staff member's line manager.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour towards children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favour to particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others in a manner which could be interpreted as inappropriate.
- Expose a child to inappropriate images, films and websites including pornography and extreme violence.
- Place themselves in a position where they are made vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.