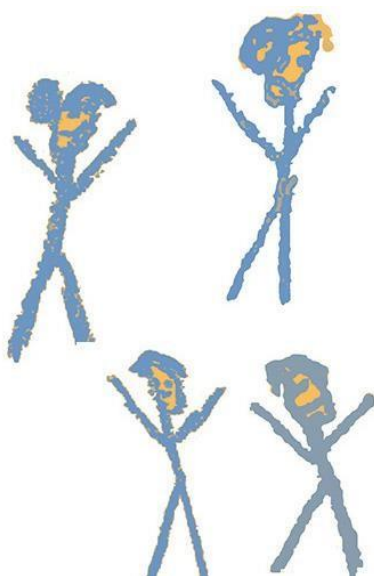




Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) Network Child Safeguarding¹ Policy



¹ Child safeguarding is the responsibility that **organisations** have to make sure their staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities. Source: Keeping Children Safe. *The International Child Safeguarding Standards*. Available online: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KCS-CS-Standards-ENG200218.pdf>

Child protection refers to the responsibility that **states parties** have under Article 19 UNCRC to prevent and respond to violence against children and "child protection authorities" includes all those involved as state actors or agents in child protection and the laws, procedures, systems and processes. Child safeguarding by COPE member organisations and individual members helps states meet their child protection responsibilities.



"All organisations whose work affects children need to develop a clear child safeguarding policy that prevents harm to children and outlines what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise."

Keeping Children Safe,

[Safeguarding Standards and How to Implement them](https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KCS-Developing-Child-Safeguarding-200218.pdf)

<https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KCS-Developing-Child-Safeguarding-200218.pdf>

Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) is a pan-European network of non-profit organisations working on behalf of children separated from an imprisoned parent. The network encourages innovative perspectives and practices to ensure that children with an imprisoned parent fully enjoy their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and that action is taken to enable their well-being and development.

Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) contact@networkcope.eu
<https://childrenofprisoners.eu/>

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Children of Prisoners Europe is a non-profit organisation registered in France under French Association law 1901.

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Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) Network
Child Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

Important note before you read:

For the purposes of this child safeguarding policy, the terms “Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE)” or “COPE” or “the Association” denote the association registered under French law in Paris (and not the members). The terms “the Children of Prisoners of Europe Network”, “the COPE Network” and “the Network” denote all the members and affiliates **and** the association registered under French law in Paris. Policy provisions may differ for the Network and for the Association.

An estimated 2.1 million children are separated from a parent in prison in Europe on a given day.² Children with a parent in prison can frequently face social, economic and emotional difficulties such as stigma, bullying, financial hardship, feelings of abandonment and shame and are often at a higher risk of violence and abuse.

The Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) Network is a European network of organisations and individuals working to encourage innovative perspectives and practice to ensure that the rights of these children are fully respected, that their needs are taken into account and that meaningful action is taken to secure their protection, well-being and healthy development.

The Network is a diverse membership-based network made up of NGOs, researchers, academics, prison governors, social workers, ombudspersons, legal experts and other likeminded stakeholders. Three cornerstones of our work underpin our core activities: **advocacy** (working with and on behalf of children with imprisoned parents to ensure that their best interests are at the heart of policymaking), **capacity-building** (co-developing tools and multi-sectoral support schemes for children, their families and the systems they encounter) and **network development** (enhancing the network’s richness, impact and diversity while fundraising for sustainability).

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the comprehensive child safeguarding policies from the following organisations, from which we drew a lot of inspiration for this updated child safeguarding policy: Eurochild, PROMISE, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Save the Children, UNICEF, Defence for Children International and Barnardos Ireland. This policy has also been checked against the Keeping Children Safe international child safeguarding standards³.

² Estimate based on figures from a 1999 study by the national French institute for statistics involving children with imprisoned fathers in France, using a parenting rate of 1.3 children per imprisoned father.

³ <https://keepingchildrensafe.global/accountability/>

2. Purpose of this document

The aim of this document is to set out COPE Network policy and principles at international level, for the Network as a whole, and to enumerate clear responsibilities for Network members and for the Association, to ensure that the Network staff, operations and programmes help to keep children safe, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the Network has about children's safety within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities. This document is complemented by the individual child safeguarding policies of the Network member organisations.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy covers anybody who represents the COPE Network. This means that all the following people must implement the policy and adhere to its requirements: all management and staff (whether permanent, temporary, or interim, contractors, consultants, trainees/interns, individual members and affiliates, volunteers), and all governance bodies (trustees, council and board members). It is the responsibility of Network members to gatekeep and supervise visitors to their projects/events/activities to ensure that they too comply with the policy.

Partners: When working with partners, the COPE Network understands the importance of establishing which organisation is responsible for all aspects of child safeguarding from concept design and planning through to implementation and follow-up and acting in the case that a concern is raised, or an incident takes place. To this end, when joint activities or projects are intended to be carried out with a partner, a joint agreement of procedure will be signed by all parties involved⁴ to clarify child safeguarding roles and responsibilities. This agreement does not impede the COPE Network or the partner(s) from meeting its/their own reporting obligations and referring any issue to relevant authorities in case of a disagreement on the appropriate course of action.

4. A brief overview of COPE Network interactions with children

While COPE (the Association) does not at present have child advisers with whom it interacts on a regular basis, COPE does have direct contact with children at Network events or during some projects (where Network members organise the engagement of children). Every time COPE advocates for children with parents in prison, it has indirect contact with children as its advocacy can have an impact on them and on their safety.

COPE Network members are diverse. Some come into direct contact with children, for example through their efforts to support children and families with a parent in prison (support groups and networking, accompanying children on visits, child consultations on e.g., developing and implementing child-friendly spaces in prison, focus groups with children and families on their experiences and needs, investigating complaints by children and families, co-production of child-friendly resources and tools, etc). Some COPE Network members may not have direct contact with children, but have indirect contact with children, including through advocacy on their behalf, or research targeting parents in prison or the children and families of a person in prison. There may also be an online dimension to COPE Network child safeguarding (e.g., online contacts with Members, online events, advocacy re online contact with parents in prison). The COPE Network can also play a role in ensuring that child safeguarding principles and policies are implemented outside their Network, for example by prison services. It is in this context that a child safeguarding policy for the Network has been developed.

⁴ See COPE Child Safeguarding Toolkit on the COPE website.

5. COPE Network child safeguarding commitment

1. The Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE) Network child safeguarding policy reaffirms and strengthens our commitment as a network of organisations and individuals to keep children safe and to protect them from all forms of violence, harm and abuse.
2. Within the COPE Network, our work with children is grounded in the UN Convention on the rights of the child. In line with the UN Convention on the rights of the child, every human being below the age of 18 is considered a child. Every child is recognised, respected and protected as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection. Every child is treated with dignity and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests, and privacy, with due regard to the child's right to participation. We understand the need to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights. Children must be involved in decisions that concern them, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of child safeguarding strategies, policies, programmes and services.
3. All children, without discrimination of any kind, have the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. We recognise that types of risk may vary according to the child and that the means of addressing risks may also vary.
4. We recognise that violence affects millions of children across the world. Children of all ages, all genders, all social contexts, and all nationalities are beaten, sexually assaulted, tortured and even killed. Abuse and harm may take place in children's families and homes, schools, institutions and communities. Children and young people can be harmed by those closest to them – their parents, guardians, teachers and employers – and by individuals who are meant to protect them, such as police and security forces.
5. We are deeply committed to eradicating violence against children and take very seriously our duty to safeguard all children and promote their well-being. The protection of children from all forms of violence is both an organisational and individual responsibility. Everyone who represents the COPE Network must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom they come into direct or indirect contact, in their COPE-related activities as well as in their private life. Furthermore, COPE Network representatives can help to raise awareness on the importance of child safeguarding and further roll out child safeguarding in the communities they work and live in, including for example in prisons, grounded in the promotion of children's rights.
6. This also means holding ourselves to account in ensuring that no child is harmed or placed at risk of harm because of their association with us and ensuring that clear measures are put in place for COPE Network organisations working with partners (assessment, agreement, support, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation, accountability mechanisms).
7. We understand that all staff should be trained in child safeguarding and that child safeguarding focal points should receive extra training to enable them to fulfil their role.
8. We understand the priority to be given to child safeguarding and understand that any concerns regarding child safeguarding should be reported to the relevant⁵ designated,

⁵ Namely the focal point for the COPE Network member organisation, or the Association, as the case may be

trained child safeguarding focal point immediately – it is never appropriate to wait and see or reflect when a child may be at risk of serious harm.

9. We commit to embedding child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in our strategies and strategic documents, as well as in our operations and actions.
10. We are deeply committed to ensuring that children’s participation rights are fulfilled and understand that children need to be safe in order for that to happen.⁶ We understand the priority to be given to ensuring that children, communities and staff are informed (in child-accessible ways for children) of child safeguarding and on how to raise concerns and we understand the priority to be given to supporting children to claim their rights.
11. We understand the necessity to develop and implement reporting procedures taking due account of national and/or regional law, policy and procedures.
12. All COPE Network members are asked to adhere to and follow the COPE Network’s child safeguarding policy as a condition of full membership. In practice, this means that member organisations are also required to provide a copy of their own child safeguarding policy, which should meet or go beyond that of the COPE Network, addressing their specific local context. If an organisation does not yet have its own child safeguarding policy and procedures in place, they must develop one and send a copy to the Association **by end 2023**. The COPE Network child safeguarding policy is complemented by Network member policies and is not a replacement. **Guidance is available in the COPE Network Child Safeguarding Toolkit on the COPE website.**
13. All members (organisations and individuals) are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct and to return a signed and dated copy to the Association **by end 2023**.
14. In the event of a Network member breaching the COPE Network’s child safeguarding policy, the Network may decide to cease working with the member and to suspend or terminate their membership.
15. This policy applies to staff working on behalf of the COPE Network in any country or context. It serves a set of minimum standards to be upheld. Where local regulations, laws or customs have a stricter set of customs and/or policies, these should be respected (for example, with regard to behaviour and dress). In any context, regardless of national laws, a child is considered to be anyone under the age of 18.
16. As set out in Principle 9 of the [COPE Principles](#) adopted on 9 June 2023, we are committed to embedding child safeguarding within our network and encouraging others, such as prison services, to do the same, including child human rights defenders within the scope. Applicant organisations for COPE membership are required to adopt and implement a robust child safeguarding policy and sign the COPE Code of Conduct before their move to full membership can be approved. Individual applicants are required to abide by the COPE Network child safeguarding policy and to sign the COPE Code of Conduct.

⁶ [Children's Human Rights to 'Participation' and 'Protection': Rethinking the relationship using Barnahus as a case example, 26 March 2023 - Mary Mitchell, Laura Lundy, Louise Hill](#) - "...while the significance of participation for protection is now well established, if not always fully accepted or practised, there has been much less attention to the other side of this coin. If children are afraid to speak for fear of physical or emotional harm, then Article 12 cannot be realised (Hill et al., [2021](#)). The question then becomes how to create a space where children are both heard and are safe – participation and protection."

"Children cannot be kept safe if they are not heard and cannot be heard where they are not safe."

17. As set out in Principle 15 of the [COPE Principles](#), we are committed to challenging, clarifying and dismantling unfounded claims, such as those on intergenerational patterns of criminality and imprisonment⁷ that may stigmatise, dehumanise or harm children with imprisoned parents, and their imprisoned and previously imprisoned parents.
18. As set out in Principle 16 of the [COPE Principles](#)), we are committed to continuously reviewing our messages and all our communication to ensure we put language to good use; to challenging assumptions, labels and stereotypes, and to eradicating from our communications any language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, stigmatises, isolates or shames people.^{8 9}
19. This document will be reviewed within two years of the date of its adoption¹⁰ by the Association in consultation with the COPE Network, and every two years thereafter.

6. COPE Network child safeguarding requirements

1. The COPE Network hereby designates Liz Ayre, Executive Director of Children of Prisoners Europe, as the Network's child safeguarding focal point.
2. The COPE Board is responsible for overseeing the Network's child safeguarding policy, and child safeguarding will therefore be a regular agenda item for its meetings.
3. **By end 2023**, each Network member organisation, as well as the Association, must develop and implement a clear child safeguarding policy aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards – covering the four standards under **policy, people, procedures and accountability** – that prevents harm to children and outlines clearly what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise. The child safeguarding policy must be developed, implemented and reviewed in consultation with stakeholders (eg governance bodies, staff, and insofar as possible through some consultation with the community in which it works). The child safeguarding policy must clearly recognise every child as a rights holder with non-negotiable rights to protection and seek to empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights. Each Network member organisation must send their policy to the Association **by end 2023**. **By end 2023**, each Network member organisation, and the Association, will publish their child safeguarding policy online in an easy-to-find manner and will inform the Association of its URL when sending a copy of the policy to the Association.
4. **By end 2023**, each Network member organisation, as well as the Association, must embed child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in its strategy and carry out appropriate risk assessments and mitigations for all its activities, programmes and operations.
5. Each Network member organisation, as well as the Association, must notify the Association of its designated child safeguarding focal point **by end 2023**. If the focal point changes after that date, the Network member organisation is required to inform the Association.
6. Each Network member as well as COPE, must return the signed and dated Code of Conduct (see below) together with a copy of its child safeguarding policy to the Association **by end 2023**. Each Network **individual** member or **individual** affiliate must return the signed and dated Code of Conduct to the Association **by end 2023**. Affiliate

⁷ [Seven out of Ten? Not even close – a Review of research on the likelihood of children with incarcerated parents becoming justice-involved, James M Conway, Central Connecticut State University](#)

⁸ <https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/2020/5/6/the-power-of-language>

⁹ See [Language as a Protective Factor: Making Conscious Word Choices to Support Children with Incarcerated Parents | SpringerLink](#)

¹⁰ See adoption date on cover page.

organisations must sign and date the Code of Conduct by end 2023 and submit a copy of their child safeguarding policy to the Association **by end 2024**.

7. **By end 2023**, each Network member organisation, as well as the Association, must implement mandatory (induction and refresher) training for all staff on safeguarding on a yearly basis, and further training for those in safeguarding focal roles, particularly with regard to reporting.¹¹
8. **As of January 2024**, each Network member, and the Association, must raise awareness and communicate the COPE Network approach to safeguarding in the communities they operate in, grounded in the promotion of children's rights and the key consideration of children as rights holders.
9. **By end 2024**, each Network member organisation is expected to have developed a range of child-friendly means of communication on child safeguarding (eg child-friendly version of their safeguarding policy, posters, complaint boxes, mechanisms to discuss child safeguarding with children and communities (eg before new projects or activities begin), etc.)
10. **By end 2024**, each Network member organisation is expected to have implemented measures to inform children, communities and staff of the policy and on the designated child safeguarding focal point (including but not limited to prominent displays in premises, child-accessible versions of their code of conduct and the main child safeguarding principles, complaints/comments boxes, information and awareness-raising sessions at the start of programmes, events, etc.) Each Network member organisation will send a summary of existing or planned child-friendly materials and mechanisms to the Association **by end December 2024**.
11. **As of January 2024**, each Member organisation, as well as the Association, is required to immediately notify¹² the board of the Association of any case(s) reported to the relevant national, regional or local authorities, where a COPE representative or a visitor to a COPE Network member's premises/events/activities is suspected of causing harm to a child.
12. **By end 2023**, each Member organisation, as well as the Association, must ensure that where applicable, clear measures are put in place for working with partners (assessment, agreement on which policy applies when and on accountability mechanisms, support, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation).
13. **As of January 2024**, all Member organisations, as well as the Association, must include a section on child safeguarding in their annual reports.
14. All Member organisations, as well as the Association, are required to carry out a review of their child safeguarding policy every two years and transmit reviewed policies to the Association.
15. As of end 2023, applicant members must have a robust child safeguarding policy which is aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards in place before their membership can be approved by COPE.
16. As of end 2023, applicant individual members or individual affiliates must return the signed and dated code of conduct to the Association before their membership can be approved by COPE.

Note: Members are invited to inform COPE of other areas on which future common guidance tools would be useful to them.

¹¹ A list of helpful e-learning and online resources can be found in the Safeguarding Toolkit on the COPE website (see Appendix X).

¹² The confidential notification should ensure to respect the child's right to privacy and be in the form of an anonymised summary (no identifiers for the child), stating the role of the representative if pertinent, but without other personal identifiers.

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7. Children of Prisoners Europe Network Code of Conduct

As stated in Article 1 of the Statutes, Children of Prisoners Europe is a network of stakeholders in Europe (organisations, institutions, civic associations and individual experts) active within prison-related, child rights and child-welfare fields. Children of Prisoners Europe is a registered association in France with headquarters in Paris and falls under civil law in France. Its member organisations are subject to the national laws of the country in which they are registered. Network members are legally and financially independent from the association registered in France. All members of the Network are expected to subscribe to shared objectives and principles, including on child safeguarding.

An estimated 2.1 million children are separated from a parent in prison across Europe on a given day.¹³ Children with a parent in prison can frequently face social, economic and emotional difficulties such as stigma, bullying, financial hardship, feelings of abandonment and shame and are often at a higher risk of violence and abuse.

The Children of Prisoners Europe Network is committed to protecting children from all forms of violence, harm and abuse. This Code of Conduct includes guidelines on behaviour for all adults representing the COPE Network in any shape or form (staff, consultants, volunteers, interns, management, governance, individual members, individual affiliates).

The COPE Network Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct provides guidance for all COPE Network representatives on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children, both in their COPE Network role and in their private life. It has been designed to give all parts of the Network (member organisations, individual members, affiliates and the Association with its headquarters in Paris) the confidence to carry out their roles and to ensure that positive relationships are developed.

The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to protect children from any harm done by us. The secondary purpose is to protect adults from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse. This is not an exclusive or exhaustive list and should be interpreted in a spirit of common sense and in consideration of the holistic view on children laid down in the UN Convention on the rights of the child.

The COPE Network operates a zero-tolerance policy with respect to discriminatory behaviour, particularly in relation to gender, disability, background, religion, sexual orientation, political views and/or the status of a child's parents and other family members. The COPE Network operates a strict non-violence policy. This includes all forms of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual harassment, violence and bullying.

The COPE Network notes that participation is not always verbal. For shyer children, for example, silent listening may be a form of participation. In its work, the COPE Network emphasises the importance of listening to the silences of children and young people.

As a representative of the COPE Network

1. We/I recognise every child as a rights holder.
2. We/I are/am deeply committed to eradicating violence against children and takes very seriously our duty to safeguard all children and young people and promote their well-being. We/I should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour towards children, and should ensure that a culture of openness exists, thereby empowering children. We/I do not tolerate any form of violence

¹³ Estimate based on figures from a 1999 study by the national French institute for statistics involving children with imprisoned fathers in France, using a parenting rate of 1.3 children per imprisoned father.

against children, even if a specific form of violence is not (yet) explicitly sanctioned under national law.

3. We/I adhere to the principle that everyone who works for the COPE Network (including all those affiliated with the organisation: staff members, consultants, contractors, interns, volunteers, board members, etc) must take all possible precautions to protect the children with whom they come into direct or indirect contact. **As people affiliated with the organisation are effectively representations of the organisation, this applies to their COPE-related activities as well as in their private life.** COPE Network members must also gatekeep and properly supervise visitors to their premises/events/activities. COPE Network representatives should avoid actions or behaviour which may constitute poor practice, potentially harmful and/or abusive behaviour and/or any action which is not in the best interests of the child, young person or otherwise vulnerable person or which could even constitute a child rights violation. We/I commit to ensuring that where applicable clear child safeguarding measures are put in place for working with partners (assessment, agreement, support, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation, accountability mechanisms).
4. As set out in Principle 15 of the [COPE Principles](#), we are committed to challenging, clarifying and dismantling unfounded claims, such as those on intergenerational patterns of criminality and imprisonment¹⁴ that may stigmatise, dehumanise or harm children with imprisoned parents, and their imprisoned and previously imprisoned parents.
5. As set out in Principle 16 of the [COPE Principles](#), we are committed to continuously reviewing our messages and all our communication to ensure we put language to good use; to challenging assumptions, labels and stereotypes, and to eradicating from our communications any language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, stigmatises, isolates or shames people.^{15 16}
6. The Children of Prisoners Europe Network has a clear child safeguarding policy aligned with the Keeping Children Safe standards – covering the four standards under policy, people, procedures and accountability – that prevents harm to children and outlines clearly what measures are in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise. If not already done, Member organisations with direct or indirect contact with children (indirect contact with children includes advocacy) are expected to adopt a robust child safeguarding policy **by end 2023**. Individual members and individual affiliates are expected to return a signed copy of this Code of Conduct to Children of Prisoners Europe **by end 2023**. Affiliate organisations are expected to submit a copy of their child safeguarding policy by end 2024.
7. We/I commit to embedding child safeguarding risk assessment and risk mitigation in our strategy, programmes and operations.
8. We/I understand the priority to be given to child safeguarding and understand that any concerns regarding child safeguarding should be discussed with the designated, trained child safeguarding focal point immediately – it is never appropriate to wait and see or take time to reflect when a child may be at risk of serious harm.

This means when working with children, COPE Network representatives must NEVER:

1. act in ways that may be abusive or place children at risk of abuse
2. hit, physically assault or physically abuse children or threaten to do so

¹⁴ [Seven out of Ten? Not even close – a Review of research on the likelihood of children with incarcerated parents becoming justice-involved, James M Conway, Central Connecticut State University](#)

¹⁵ <https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/2020/5/6/the-power-of-language>

¹⁶ See [Language as a Protective Factor: Making Conscious Word Choices to Support Children with Incarcerated Parents | SpringerLink](#)

3. use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
4. act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others
5. contribute to or disseminate unfounded claims, such as those on intergenerational patterns of criminality and imprisonment¹⁷ that may stigmatise, dehumanise or harm children with imprisoned parents, and their imprisoned and previously imprisoned parents
6. make assumptions, label or stereotype children with parents in prison and their families
7. use language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, stigmatises, isolates or shames people
8. engage in behaviours that are physically inappropriate or sexually provocative
9. engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years irrespective of the age of majority/consent or local custom
10. expose children to inappropriate images, films, music and/or websites including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and/or violence
11. as a COPE Network representative who is not a relative of a child, stay alone overnight with one or more children benefitting from the organisation's programmes and who are not part of their family, whether in a compound, hotel, project premises, other accommodations or elsewhere
12. have a child beneficiary, who is not a part of their family, visit their home or stay overnight at their home
13. condone, or participate in, illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards any child
14. allow allegations or complaints made by a child or concerns raised about their welfare to go unrecorded
15. fail to follow up on or act on any allegations or complaints made by a child or an adult on behalf of a child

This means when working with children, COPE Network representatives must ALWAYS:

1. recognise, respect and protect every child, without discrimination, as a rights holder, with non-negotiable rights to protection
2. contribute to create and/or uphold an environment where children are listened to and feel empowered and respected as individuals
3. always recognise, respect and protect the concept of dignity attached to each child as a rights holder and as a unique and valuable human being with an individual personality, distinct needs, interests and privacy
4. help to challenge, clarify and dismantle unfounded claims, such as those on intergenerational patterns of criminality and imprisonment¹⁸ that may stigmatise, dehumanise or harm children with imprisoned parents, and their imprisoned and previously imprisoned parents

¹⁷ [Seven out of Ten? Not even close – a Review of research on the likelihood of children with incarcerated parents becoming justice-involved, James M Conway, Central Connecticut State University](#)

¹⁸ [Seven out of Ten? Not even close – a Review of research on the likelihood of children with incarcerated parents becoming justice-involved, James M Conway, Central Connecticut State University](#)

5. continuously review our messages and all our communication to ensure we put language to good use
6. help to challenge assumptions, labels and stereotypes
7. help to eradicate from our communications any language that disempowers, dehumanises, degrades, stigmatises, isolates or shames people ¹⁹ ²⁰
8. adopt a culture of support, respect and tolerance, always be attentive to children's needs and respond to them in a positive manner.
9. ensure to be a positive role model, for example, treating everyone equitably and always apologising for any mistakes
10. understand the requirement to respect children's agency, and to further empower children to protect themselves and their peers and to claim their rights
11. involve children in all decisions that concern them, including the development, monitoring and evaluation of child safeguarding strategies, policies, programmes and services
12. plan activities in advance to ensure they take into account the age range, gender and needs, and ability of all participants
13. always conduct child safeguarding risk assessments in the context of activities, operations and programmes (identify potential impact on or contact with children, including online, identify and analyse the potential risks of that impact or contact, evaluate the risks in terms of likelihood they could occur and the seriousness of the impact on children, implement strategies to minimise and prevent risk, consistently and rigorously review and revise risks and preventative measures, review the adequacy of risk management at the end of project/programme/activity to inform future actions, communicate and consult regarding risks)
14. avoid working alone and spending excessive time with a child and be aware of situations which may present risks
15. use the Two-Adult Rule²¹ because it: (1) significantly reduces the risk of an incident of abuse; (2) protects against false accusations; (3) reduces liability and a possible claim of negligence; and (4) offers additional help if there is an accident or emergency
16. avoid inappropriate physical contact with a child. If a child is hurt or distressed, comfort or reassure him/her without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit the child's own behaviour
17. behave appropriately, model good behaviour, ensure that language is moderated in the presence of children and refrain from jokes or comments which are clearly inappropriate
18. pay attention to what children say, respect their right to be heard, have read and fully understood the guidance on dealing with disclosures by children (in appendices to the policy) and respond/report appropriately
19. be fully prepared to handle the situation in the appropriate manner if a child discloses child abuse to them
20. understand that the guiding principle in responding to any concerns around child safeguarding and protection is that the safety and welfare of the child should always take precedence. No child should be put at more risk by any action a COPE Network representative takes. The COPE Network representative should do all they can to remove the child from immediate danger and ensure she or he is comfortable. They should respect the Two-Adult Rule and they should do all you can to minimise delays

¹⁹ <https://home.crin.org/readlistenwatch/stories/2020/5/6/the-power-of-language>

²⁰ See [Language as a Protective Factor: Making Conscious Word Choices to Support Children with Incarcerated Parents | SpringerLink](#)

²¹ **The Two-Adult Rule** requires that no fewer than **two adults** be present at all times when with a child.

21. understand that as many as 80% of child abuse cases may include a digital component. The person receiving a disclosure should note any disclosures in this regard, which may be essential to capture compelling evidence during any investigation.
22. be mindful of the power imbalance between adults and children and commit to never abuse the power and influence that one has by virtue of one's position over the well-being of any child
23. seek to always further empower children: inform them on their rights, teach them what is acceptable behaviour of adults towards them, what is not appropriate or unacceptable, and what they can do if something concerns or worries them
24. be familiar with the COPE Network member organisation's reporting procedure. This means that you must report to the designated child safeguarding focal point any concern relating to the safety of a child immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so
25. maintain confidentiality and respect children's privacy, while respecting national child protection laws with regard to reporting, mandated or otherwise, of known or suspected child abuse

On behalf of my organisation/as an individual member or individual affiliate, I agree to abide by the COPE Network child safeguarding Code of Conduct and the COPE Network safeguarding policy. Furthermore, if I represent an organisation, I take responsibility for the implementation of the policy and for ensuring that all persons working for/affiliated with my organisation are fully informed of our child safeguarding policy.

I understand that any breaches of the COPE Network child safeguarding Code of Conduct will be reported and appropriate action, in accordance with the policies and procedures in place, will be taken.

Organisation (where applicable):

Name:

Title/Role:

Date:

Signature:

8. Recap of timelines in the COPE Network child safeguarding policy

Who?	Action	Deadline (and source - COPE Network child safeguarding policy requirement No))
The Association	Develop/review child safeguarding policy	By end 2023 – REQ 3
	Publish the policy online in an easy to find manner	By end 2023 – REQ 3
	Embed child safeguarding risk management	By end 2023 – REQ 4
	Appoint a child safeguarding focal point and notify COPE	By end 2023 – REQ 5
	Submit signed copy of code of conduct and policy	By end 2023 – REQ 6
	Implement mandatory induction and refresher child safeguarding training	By end 2023 – REQ 7
	Raise awareness and communicate on COPE approach to child safeguarding in communities they work in	As of January 2024 – REQ 8
	Inform the COPE board of any case (whilst respecting the privacy of those concerned) reported to child protection authorities involving a COPE representative	As of January 2024 – REQ 11
	Put clear partnership measures in place for child safeguarding	By end 2023 – REQ 12
	Include a section on child safeguarding in annual reports	As of January 2024 – REQ 13
	Review child safeguarding policy	Every two years
	Collate and log policies, signed codes of conduct and URLS submitted by members, communicate to board on Networking child safeguarding progress	Ongoing
Member Organisations	Develop/review child safeguarding policy	By end 2023 – REQ 3
	Publish the policy online in an easy to find manner and inform the Association of the URL	By end 2023 – REQ 3
	Embed child safeguarding risk management	By end 2023 – REQ 4
	Appoint a child safeguarding focal point and notify COPE	By end 2023 – REQ 5
	Submit signed copy of code of conduct and policy to COPE	By end 2023 – REQ 6
	Implement mandatory induction and refresher child safeguarding training	By end 2023 – REQ 7
	Raise awareness and communicate on COPE approach to child safeguarding in communities they work in	As of January 2024 – REQ 8
	Develop a range of child-friendly materials on child safeguarding	By end 2024 – REQ 9
	Implemented measures to inform children, communities, staff on child safeguarding and send a summary to COPE	By end 2024 – REQ 10

	Inform the COPE board of any case (whilst respecting the privacy of those concerned) reported to child protection authorities involving a COPE representative	As of January 2024 – REQ 11
	Put clear partnership measures in place for child safeguarding	By end 2023 – REQ 12
	Include a section on child safeguarding in annual reports	As of January 2024 – REQ 13
	Review child safeguarding policy	Every two years
	Collate and log policies and codes of conduct submitted by members, summaries of child-friendly and other materials, communicate to board	Ongoing
Individual members	Return the signed and dated code of conduct to the Association. Each Network member or affiliate organisation , as well as COPE, must return the signed and dated Code of Conduct (see below) together with a copy of its child safeguarding policy to the Association by end 2023 . Each Network individual member or individual affiliate must return the signed and dated Code of Conduct to the Association by end 2023 .	By end 2023
Affiliate organisations	Return the signed and dated code of conduct to the Association.	By end 2023 – REQ 6
	Submit a copy of their child safeguarding policy to the Association	By end 2024 – REQ 6
Individual affiliates	Return the signed and dated code of conduct to the Association.	By end 2023 – REQ 6
Applicant organisations	Must have a robust child safeguarding policy in place before membership can be approved	As of end 2023 – REQ 15
Applicant individual members or affiliates	Must return the signed and dated code of conduct to COPE before membership can be approved	As of end 2023 – REQ 16

9. The COPE Network Child Safeguarding Toolkit content

See the Toolkit for:

<u>I. Definitions (for the purposes of the COPE Network’s Child Safeguarding Policy)</u>	2
<u>II. Guidance on indicators of abuse (covering child and adult behaviours)</u>	8
<u>III. If a child discloses abuse to you: some do’s and don’ts</u>	11
<u>IV. Guidance on responding to a concern and sanctions</u>	14
<u>V. Reporting flowchart template</u>	17
<u>VI. Template for a COPE Network member organisation report on a child safeguarding concern</u>	18
<u>VII. Tips on writing a child safeguarding policy</u>	22
<u>VIII. Recommended table of contents (annotated) for a COPE Network member child safeguarding policy</u>	26
<u>IX. Guidance on safer recruitment processes</u>	33
<u>X. How to write a child-friendly document – guidance and process</u>	37
<u>XI. Guidance on child safeguarding training for the COPE Network</u>	41
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