



CODE OF CONDUCT

**Updated version approved by the Board of Directors in December 2023 – Effective January 1, 2024*

Introduction and scope of application

The International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) establishes and maintains working relationships, partnerships and other forms of collaboration with various individuals and entities. The IBCR ensures that these relationships are based on clear principles and commitments, which are described in this Code of Conduct and reflect the organisation's vision, mission and values.

This Code of Conduct:

- Shall be presented to all IBCR affiliates, whether they are individuals or entities, and appended to their contracts. The following are considered IBCR affiliates:

Employee	An individual who is employed under contract by the IBCR
Intern or volunteer	An individual who carries out work for the IBCR under an internship contract or volunteer agreement
Foreign assignment volunteer	An individual who carries out work for the IBCR under a foreign assignment volunteer agreement
Supplier	A person or entity that is bound by a contract, purchase order or other agreement to provide goods or services to the IBCR in exchange for financial compensation
Project partner	A person or legal entity who receives technical and/or financial support from the IBCR

Observer: A person who supports the IBCR's official activities on a one-off basis (such as a journalist or sponsor visiting an event) or a child associated with an official IBCR event.

- Must be adhered to and applied by all IBCR affiliates in everything they do and for the entire duration of their relationship with the IBCR. Failure to do so may result in sanctions or corrective measures affecting the working relationship.

Our collective commitments

I. Commitment to children

All IBCR affiliates agree to uphold and apply the principle of "do no harm," which implies:

- Acting in accordance with the "do no harm" principle in all direct or indirect interactions with children or relating to children.
- Ensuring the safety and welfare of children.
- Upholding the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion when dealing with children.
- Adhering to the principle of privacy protection as it relates to all verbal and written exchanges, all communications, and all documents, images and videos produced in the course of their collaboration with the IBCR. This type of information must be kept confidential and cannot be shared with a third party without prior authorisation from the IBCR, especially when the information pertains to children.
- Avoiding actions or omissions that could result in a harmful, negative or dangerous consequence for a child. This involves creating and maintaining a safe environment that prevents any intentional or unintentional harm to children.
- Never engaging children in any of the forms of labour prohibited by Convention 182 of the International Labour Organization.¹
- Avoiding acts, omissions or behaviour that could be associated with gender-based or sexual violence against children.
- Never disseminating or sharing any form of information, including images or video recordings, that relates to a child without their consent and which may be harmful to them.

II. Commitment to combating all forms of abuse and violence

All IBCR affiliates agree to uphold and apply the principle of abuse and violence prevention, which implies:

- Establishing and maintaining a collaborative environment that **prevents abusive behaviour and violence in the workplace**, including all forms of psychological and sexual harassment.
- Never behaving in a way that could be associated with **abuse, violence or harassment**.
- Complying with the **duty to report** any behaviour that could be deemed harmful to others under the Code of Conduct.
- Behaving in a way that **reflects the IBCR's values and in no way tarnishes** its reputation as an organisation that promotes and defends children's rights.
- Never engaging in any **acts, conduct or behaviour** that are contrary to the IBCR's values and mission.
- Never engaging in an IBCR activity or collaboration while **under the influence** of any impairing substance (alcohol or drugs).
- Never **exploiting the vulnerability** of an individual or group.
- Never entering a **romantic or intimate relationship** or **engaging in sexual relations** with persons benefiting from the IBCR's activities.
- **Declaring any form of romantic or intimate relationship** with an IBCR employee, intern, foreign assignment volunteer or any other person who collaborates with the IBCR or who is directly or indirectly involved in IBCR activities.

¹ [ILO, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 \(No. 182\) \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/)



- Never engaging in **sexual activity and/or romantic or intimate relations with anyone under the age of 18**, regardless of the legal age of consent or the age of majority in the country where they are located.

III. Commitment to physical and moral integrity

All IBCR affiliates agree to:

- **Never voluntarily exposing themselves to risks** endangering their physical or moral integrity.
- **Never causing risks or exposing another person to risks** endangering their physical or moral integrity.

IV. Commitment to accountability

All IBCR affiliates agree to uphold and apply the principle of accountability, which implies:

- Promoting a **collaborative and respectful environment** and communicating in a way that is **polite, honest and non-violent**, in terms of both what is said (words) and how it is said (tone).
- Endeavouring to **keep confidential** all formal or informal verbal exchanges, written messages and images obtained in the course of their collaboration with the IBCR.
- Promoting an **environment that is free from racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination and prejudice**, and in which all people are treated with respect and dignity.
- Promoting and upholding a **zero-tolerance stance** on fraud and corruption in all its forms.
- Taking into consideration all resources (human, financial, material) made available by the IBCR, treating them **reasonably and responsibly**, and using them solely for IBCR activities in accordance with the terms set out in their contract and this Code of Conduct.
- Refraining from corrupt or **fraudulent acts**, or relationships that could be associated with a **conflict of interest** or **collusion**.
- Never engaging in **terrorist financing activities**.
- Never using **materials provided by the IBCR or bearing the IBCR logo** (t-shirts, banners or items) in activities that are incongruent with the organisation's mission and values, against the law or associated with a religious, political or social viewpoint.
- Never engaging in **blackmail or humiliating or degrading practices** in exchange for assistance from the IBCR.
- Declaring any **friendships, family ties or romantic relationships** with IBCR employees.

Reporting violations of the commitments

IBCR affiliates are required to report any confirmed or suspected violation of the principles and commitments set out in this Code of Conduct.

To report a situation, please send an email to:

solidaires@ibcr.org



IBCR employees, interns and volunteers can also report violations to the Human Resources, Administration and Security Department (HRASD).

All reported situations will automatically be handled in accordance with the IBCR's Complaints Management and Reporting Policy.

Formalising the commitments

All contracts binding the IBCR and an affiliate must include the following paragraph:

"In my capacity as a _____ with an employment, partnership or collaborative relationship with the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR), I hereby declare that I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and its principles, and agree to uphold and promote them for the duration of my relationship with the IBCR."

This Code of Conduct shall be appended to all IBCR contracts, agreements and other documents formalising collaborative arrangements.

Appendices

Application

The **Board of Directors** is responsible for approving the Code of Conduct and ensuring that it is aligned with the IBCR's mission and values.

The **Director General's office** is responsible for ensuring that the Code of Conduct is properly disseminated, understood and adhered to.

All **Management Committee members and team managers** are responsible for ensuring that the Code of Conduct is provided to and signed by all IBCR affiliates associated with their department.

All **IBCR affiliates** are responsible for complying with the Code of Conduct for as long as they collaborate with the IBCR.

Definitions

1) The principle of privacy protection

Privacy protection means ensuring that any information or data shared by a third party, including related entities and individuals, is used and stored in a manner that complies with their consent.²

2) The principle of "do no harm"

Definition taken directly from the Collaborative Learning Project (CDA):³

Applying Do No Harm helps organisations to become more effective, accountable and efficient. It supports effectiveness by encouraging organisations to tailor their interventions to the specific contexts in which they are implemented. It supports accountability by requiring that an organisation respond to any unintentional negative impacts created by its intervention, and by encouraging local voices and priorities in programming. It supports efficiency by helping implementers to foresee and prevent unintended negative impacts, so that plans can be implemented more smoothly, and with more support from local communities.

3) Violence

Definition taken directly from the Government of Quebec:⁴

Forms of violence

In an interaction between two or more persons, an act of violence occurs when words, texts or behaviours, whether obvious or subtle, are used intentionally against another person and that may bring about negative repercussions (anxiety, loss of material assets, trauma, psychological damage, developmental problems, physical injuries, death).

² Definition inspired by: [Definition of data privacy – Glossary CDP.com](#)

³ [Do No Harm – CDA Collaborative \(cdacollaborative.org\)](#)

⁴ [Forms of Violence | Government of Quebec \(quebec.ca\)](#)

This means that the way a person behaves in certain situations may be considered violent. For example, forcefully insisting on getting something from another person, even virtually through text messages or emails, can be regarded as violence.

4) Gender-based violence against children

The IBCR defines⁵ gender-based violence against children as any type of abuse, exploitation or maltreatment of a physical, sexual, psychological or economic nature against a child or group of children, motivated by gender-related considerations. These child rights violations may be perpetrated by adults, other children or institutions.

Gender-based violence can be inflicted directly, through pressure or intimidation, or through a failure to protect the child or to provide access to resources or services. Violence is deemed to be gender-based when it is motivated by socially determined views or expectations assigned to one gender or when it is motivated by gender inequality (which generally favours men and boys) and the resulting imbalance and abuse of power.

The many forms of gender-based violence can affect all children, but girls are disproportionately the victims of it.

5) Sexual violence against children

The IBCR defines sexual violence as sexual abuse and exploitation in all its forms, including physical and psychological abuse. Any child can be subjected to sexual violence.⁶

Child sexual abuse does not necessarily involve the use of force or physical coercion, but it implies some form of abuse of authority or power, coercion, deception or manipulation. Sexually suggestive acts, gestures, words, behaviours or attitudes do not imply physical contact with the child or continuity over time. The child may receive something in exchange, such as money, emotional rewards or access to an advantage.⁷ The abuse is nonetheless always detrimental to the child and constitutes an infringement of the child's rights.⁸

⁵ Definition inspired by the following resources: UN Women, online: [Forms of Violence | UN Women - Headquarters unwomen.org](#), [accessed June 18, 2021]; UNFPA, *Managing Gender-Based Violence Programmes in Emergencies*, available online: [GBV E-Learning Companion Guide ENGLISH.pdf \(unfpa.org\)](#) [accessed June 18, 2021]; Inter-Organization Standing Committee, 2015, *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action – Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery*, available online: https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf [accessed June 18, 2021]; UNHCR – [Gender-based violence \(unhcr.org\)](#); UNICEF, *Study on Gender-Based Violence and Online Violence in Schools*, 2019, available online, [in French only: GBV study.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#) [accessed June 18, 2021]; Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 13 (2011), *The Right of the Child to Freedom from all Forms of Violence*, April 18, 2011 (CRC.C.GC.13).

⁶ Interagency Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation 2016, *Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ecpat.lu)*, p. 18, [consulted on June 18, 2021].

⁷ United Nations Children's Fund, *Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, 2020*, p. 6, available online: [CSAE-Report-En.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#), [accessed June 18, 2021].

⁸ Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 13 (2011), *The Right of the Child to Freedom from all Forms of Violence*, April 18, 2011 (CRC.C.GC.13), par. 25.

Child sexual abuse may be committed by one or several people, in any environment, including virtual ones. Frequently, the perpetrator is the child's family or community member, peer, intimate partner, or adult who the child trusts or considers a figure of authority.⁹

6) Psychological or sexual harassment

The definition of psychological or sexual harassment used by the IBCR was established by the labour laws that apply to all signatories to the Code of Conduct. More specifically, the definition is taken directly from the Commission des normes en santé et sécurité au travail du Québec:¹⁰

It is vexatious (abusive, humiliating, hurtful) conduct in the form of comments, gestures or behaviour that:

- *Are repeated*
- *Are hostile (aggressive, threatening) or unwanted*
- *Adversely affect the person's dignity (that is, self-respect, self-esteem) or integrity (physical, psychological or emotional balance)*
- *Make the workplace harmful for the person*

A single serious incident of such behaviour could also be considered harassment if it has a lasting negative impact on the person.

Psychological or sexual harassment can occur at all levels in the hierarchy of a company: between managerial staff, between coworkers, between a manager and a member of staff. Harassment may also come from clients, a supplier, etc.

7) Fraud and corruption

The following definitions are taken from the UNDP *Policy against Fraud and other Corrupt Practices*:

The definition of fraud and corruption varies among countries and jurisdictions, and the term is commonly used to describe a wide variety of dishonest practices. The following definitions apply in this Policy:

Fraud is any act or omission whereby an individual or entity knowingly misrepresents or conceals a fact:

a) in order to obtain an undue benefit or advantage or avoid an obligation for himself, herself, itself or a third party; and/or

b) in such a way as to cause an individual or entity to act, or fail to act, to his, her or its detriment.

⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*, 2020, available online: [CSAE-Summary-En.pdf \(unicef.org\)](#), p. 5 and 8, [consulted June 18, 2021]; Civil Society Declaration on Sexual Violence, available online: [Civil Society Declaration.pdf \(4genderjustice.org\)](#), p. 5, [accessed June 18, 2021].

¹⁰ [Psychological or Sexual Harassment in the Workplace | Commission des normes de l'équité de la santé et de la sécurité du travail – CNESST \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)

Likewise, the common definition of presumptive fraud for the United Nations system is: "Allegations that have been deemed to warrant an investigation and, if substantiated, would establish the existence of fraud resulting in loss of resources to the organisation."

Corruption is the act of doing something with an intent to give an advantage inappropriate with official duties to obtain a benefit, to harm or to influence improperly the actions of another party.

Actions taken to instigate, aid, abet, attempt, conspire or cooperate in a fraudulent or corrupt act, also constitute fraud or corruption.¹¹

8) Conflict of interest

The following definition was taken directly from Éducaloi:¹²

A conflict of interest is any situation where an outside observer might wonder whether you were influenced by the interests of someone other than the non-profit while acting on the organisation's behalf. So, this includes any situation where you could be influenced by your interests or the interests of someone you have a relationship with, such as:

- *A loved one*
- *Your employer*
- *A company you own shares in*
- *A different organisation you're involved with*

¹¹ [UNDP Policy against Fraud and other Corrupt Practices](#)

¹² [Non-profits: Handling Conflicts of Interest | Éducaloi \(educaloi.gc.ca\)](#)