

## **Brave Movement Child Safeguarding Policy**

### **I. Introduction**

The Brave Movement is a global, networked and inclusive advocacy movement of survivors and allies to end sexual violence against children. It envisions a world in which all children and adolescents grow up free from the fear of sexual violence.

The Brave Movement pursues two main strategies:

- (1) elevating and supporting survivor voices and leadership; and**
- (2) supporting international movement-building and aligned, coordinated advocacy and campaigns.**

These strategies are rooted in a three-pronged framework that emphasizes prevention, healing and justice. In each of these areas the Brave Movement seeks to: shift social norms to break the barriers of silence around sexual violence against children; and transform policies and programs that address them. Shifting social norms will reduce the stigma felt by survivors and raise awareness that sexual violence against children is both criminal and preventable. Transforming policies and programs will raise this issue on global and national agendas and increase exponentially the funding available to implement them.

Given the goals of the Brave Movement – i.e., to elevate survivor leadership and end sexual violence against all children, everywhere – the safeguarding of children, survivors and the communities in which they live is at the core of its work. Safeguarding guidelines and decisions will always prioritize the rights and dignity of children and survivors. To achieve this, the leadership of the Brave Movement will promote a culture at all levels of the movement that values and facilitates safeguarding.

The Brave Movement is led by two key bodies: a group of Survivor Advocates Globally Empowered (SAGE) and a Global Steering Group (GSG). These groups are supported by a Movement Action Team (MAT) and selected advisers and consultants. The Brave Movement is rapidly increasing its outreach to dedicated individuals and organizations across the world, united in their commitment to end sexual violence against all children, everywhere.

This Child Safeguarding Policy applies to individual members of the SAGE, GSG and MAT. It also applies to all advisers, consultants, volunteers and partners formally associated with the Brave Movement. Members of the SAGE and GSG who come from organizations that have their own safeguarding policies – with guidelines and accountability mechanisms as robust as those outlined in this policy – can choose to sign this policy or provide a copy of their organizational policies to the MAT.

This Child Safeguarding Policy is seen as the first step in a broader effort to promote and protect rights and well-being of all people – regardless of age - who are in contact or engaged with the Brave Movement. This is particularly important given the Brave Movement's commitment to survivor leadership and empowerment.

### **Child Safeguarding Principles**

The overall values and principles of the Brave Movement are outlined in Participation Agreements that are signed by all members of the SAGE and GSG. This policy focuses on principles specific to child safeguarding.

This child safeguarding policy is based on: Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its optional protocols; the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and all child-related conventions; and international good practice.

This child safeguarding policy is based on the following six principles:

- (1) All children have equal rights to protection from harm.**
- (2) All children have the right to participate, to positive well-being and to positive experience.**
- (3) Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children.**
- (4) Organizations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.**
- (5) If organizations work with partners, they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on safeguarding.**
- (6) All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.**

## **II. Definitions and Terms**

This policy defines child safeguarding as the responsibility of organizations to make sure their staff, operations and programs – as well as those of their partners and affiliates - *do no harm* to children on-line and off-line. This means that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse and that any concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which it works or the events/activities which it supports, are reported to the appropriate authorities. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

The definitions and terms set out in this child safeguarding policy are aligned with those spelled out in the Participation Agreements signed by SAGE and GSG members. For the purposes of this policy and its annexes, harms to children include everything covered in the definitions below. This list is not exhaustive and will be revised if and when additional harms emerge. An initial list of the types of harms covered by this policy include:

- (1) Abuse: Any act of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation involving potential or actual harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of others and committed by a person in a position of responsibility, trust or power.**
- (2) Abuse of power: The improper use of a position of power, influence or authority by an individual or group against others. This abuse can take the form of intimidation, threats, blackmail or humiliation.**
- (3) Emotional abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts on a child's emotional development. Emotionally abusive acts include restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.**
- (4) Harassment: Any inappropriate conduct which has the purposes or effect of offending or humiliating others. This conduct may be of a verbal, non-verbal or physical nature**

and intended to hurt, degrade, intimidate, humiliate or embarrass, or to create a climate of hostility, intimidation or discomfiture. Harassment usually supposes a series of incidents.

- (5) **Neglect and negligent treatment:** Allowing for context, resources and circumstances, neglect and negligent treatment refers to a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral and mental development. It includes failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm and provide for nutrition, shelter and safe living/working conditions.
- (6) **Sexual abuse:** Any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature involving force or in unequal or coercive conditions. The use of actual force is not necessary for such acts to be considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse refers to the participation of a child in a sexual act aimed toward the physical gratification of the person committing the act.
- (7) **Sexual exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Participating in the organization of abuse is also considered to be sexual exploitation.
- (8) **Sexual violence:** Any intentional act or attempted act of a sexual nature committed without the explicit consent of the victim or under circumstances that eliminate or limit the victim's capacity to consent.
- (9) **Violence:** An act that threatens, attempts or actually inflicts harm on another person or groups of others. It is a means of control and oppression including emotional, social or economic force, coercion or pressure, as well as physical harm. It can be overt, in the form of a physical assault or threatening someone with a weapon; it can also be covert, in the form of intimidation, threats, persecution, deception or other forms of psychological or social pressure.

### **III. Components of the Child Safeguarding Policy**

The aim of this child safeguarding policy is threefold: to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children; to protect their rights and well-being; and to respond appropriately and in the best interests of children should abuse occur. To do this, it includes eight components, set out below.

#### **A. Behavior Protocols and Code of Conduct**

All individuals covered by this child safeguarding policy will abide by the Code of Conduct contained in **Annex 1** of this policy. The Code applies to behavior both within and outside the workplace.

#### **B. Recruitment**

All staff, partners, consultants and volunteers formally associated with the Brave Movement will:

- (1) **sign this child safeguarding policy; and**
- (2) **undergo interviews that include a discussion of child safeguarding, to gauge understanding of and commitment to this concept.**

In addition, individuals whose job descriptions involve direct contact with children – or gain them access to children's information – will:

- (3) **be asked to provide at least two references who can speak to their suitability to be in direct contact with children or children's data/information; and**
- (4) **undergo criminal record checks (as and where possible).**

Protection checks, including police checks if disclosure is unavailable, form an important part of the Brave Movement recruitment policy and cover all those individuals with whom it has an employment relationship, as well as members of the SAGE and GSG. If police checks are impossible or unreliable, other checks are put into practice and noted. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declaration about previous convictions and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases<sup>1</sup>.

A checklist for recruitment and selection is included in this policy as **Annex 2**.

### **C. Education and Training**

All individuals who fall under this policy will receive a formal induction on its scope and provisions at the time of their engagement with the Brave Movement. For Brave Movement staff and members of the GSG and SAGE, annual refresher trainings on this policy will also be made available as well as timely updates on any changes made to its provisions. For consultant and volunteers associated with the Brave Movement for longer than 12 months, periodic trainings will be offered, adapted to needs and contracts.

Steps will be taken to ensure that all individuals who fall under this policy are aware of the designated Child Safeguarding Focal Point (the Administrative Vice Chair of the GSG) and her/his alternate (the Programme Manager of the MAT). These focal points are responsible for receiving reports of concerns and alleged violations of this policy and advising the Movement Executive Coordinator accordingly. The Movement Executive Coordinator, in consultation with the leadership of the SAGE and GSG, is responsible for assessing and mitigating risk in line with this policy.

The policy will be publicized internally and available on the website, along with a clear explanation of how complaints can be reported.

### **D. Communications and Social Media**

In its use of information and visual images – both photographic stills video - the overriding principle of the Brave Movement is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. The Brave Movement communications guidelines are included with this policy as **Annex 3**. **Annex 3(a)** is the consent form for obtaining images of children as well as adults for use by the Brave Movement.

Similarly, the Brave Movement is committed to safeguarding children on social platforms as to ensure the safe use of technology. The communications guidelines included in **Annex 3** also apply to social media engagement and interactions with children on digital platforms.

### **E. Risk Assessment/ Risk Mitigation**

All events and/or other initiatives of the Brave Movement that directly engage children will undergo a risk assessment process regarding their potential impact on children. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed and implemented to minimize the risks identified in the assessments. The commitment to do risk assessments extends to all staff positions and all operations of the Movement; the aim is to identify all potential risks and incorporate mitigation strategies into the design, delivery and evaluation of initiatives, operations and activities.

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<sup>1</sup> As an additional check, the Brave Movement will consult the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (<https://misconductdisclosurescheme.org>)

**Annex 4** contains guidelines for assessing risk in events or activities that directly engage children. A formal risk assessment procedure will be expected for each such activity that is associated with the Brave Movement, whether undertaken by the MAT, members of the SAGE or GSG or other partners. In the case of the MAT, the Movement Executive Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are in place. In the case of the GSG and SAGE, the leadership of those groups is responsible.

In the case of other partners, the Movement Executive Coordinator will seek to ensure that a risk assessment has been done and appropriate mitigation measures are in place. It is not anticipated that the MAT can oversee or be involved with the risk assessments done by individual partners.

The development of Annex 4 is designed to make the participation of children in Brave Movement events and activities safe. It is not meant to discourage the participation of children in these events and activities. The Brave Movement recognizes and strongly supports the participation rights of children, including their rights to effective participation, positive well-being and positive experience.

Ideally, entities receiving financial or in-kind support should have their own child safeguarding policies in place. Recognizing that this will not always be the case, **Annex 5** contains a series of questions to be answered of every entity that does not have such a policy and receives financial or in-kind support from the Brave Movement for events or activities that directly engage children. Discussion with these potential partners will take place, led by the Movement Executive Coordinator (or the person delegated by her/him), who will decide whether risks have been adequately identified and mitigated.

## **F. Disclosure of Sexual Violence**

“Disclosing” refers to the moment individuals initially speak of their own experience of sexual violence, whether to one person or in a public forum (on or off-line). While there are benefits to disclosure (e.g., as a healing experience and as an opportunity to interrupt the abuse), there are also risks (e.g., threats to the individual or her/his family or increased feelings of stigma or shame).

The Brave Movement offers guidelines to survivors who are considering public disclosure of their past sexual assault and abuse experience, to help this be a safe and healing experience. In addition, children who disclose abuse require special attention and consideration. **Annex 6** summarizes guidelines for disclosing abuse for survivors under and over 18 years; it also provides guidelines for listening to a disclosure from a survivor/victim under and over 18 years.

## **G. Reporting and Responding to Concerns**

As outlined in **Annex 7**, the Brave Movement recognizes two levels of concerns that might arise concerning people or activities associated with it. The first level of concern involves violations of the Brave Movement child safeguarding policy which have the potential to cause harm to children but about which no actual harm has been observed or reported. Brave Movement staff, volunteers and partners are encouraged to bring these violations to the attention of the Movement Executive Coordinator, to prevent harm from occurring. The second level of concern includes violations of the Brave Movement child safeguarding policy that have caused harm, either directly observed, suspected or reported. The harms covered by this policy are spelled out in section II, points 1-9.

**Annex 7** contains a flowchart for receiving and managing reports and responding to these concerns. The reporting process is based on the following principles:

- (1) Disclosures from children concerning sexual violence perpetrated against them should be treated with utmost sensitivity and should follow the guidance contained in Annex 6 of this policy.**

- (2) Allegations of breaches of this policy will be investigated promptly and confidentially, using the process outlined in Annex 7.**
- (3) If the allegation is a criminal issue, the Brave Movement will assess legal obligations to report against the interests of the survivor(s). The Brave Movement will report when legally authorized to do so, unless a report is judged likely to cause greater harm to existing victims or potential future victims. The legal framework used will be that of the place where the incident occurred.**
- (4) Individuals who fall under this policy and who raise concerns of serious misconduct will be protected as far as possible from victimization or any other retaliation, provided that concerns are raised in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offense and will also be investigated.**
- (5) Investigations will be conducted by person(s) with the skills to do so and will include interviews of various parties (including witnesses) to gather all relevant details of allegations. The Brave Movement will draw on the expertise of partners as well as qualified experts to conduct these investigations.**
- (6) If allegations are found to be true, appropriate action will be taken, depending in the status of the perpetrator vis-à-vis the Brave Movement (e.g, MAT member, partner, etc).**
- (7) To the extent possible, the Brave Movement will provide support and counselling for all those involved in the report and response.**

The Brave Movement website also includes a visible, user-friendly process for reporting concerns about people or situations associated with the Brave Movement that are perceived to violate any part of this policy. **Annex 7 (a)** contains a form for reporting concerns and/or violations of this policy.

#### **H. Monitoring and Review**

An annual report on the implementation of this policy will be made by the Movement Executive Coordinator to the SAGE and GSG. The purposes of this report will be to: report on incidents that occurred during the year; evaluate adherence to the child safeguarding policy; and address any gaps or shortcomings in its implementation.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner, if Brave Movement leadership deems this necessary.