

Ethical Guidelines and Child Protection Policy

The Ethical Guidelines and Child Protection Policy that follow must be signed and strictly adhered to by every member of a Children's Rights Ombudsman monitoring group.

Kazakhstan Children's Rights Ombudsman

Monitors' Ethical Guidelines and Child Protection Policy

Introduction

Through its monitoring activities, the Office of the Kazakhstan Children's Rights Ombudsman aims to ensure the safe and appropriate care of children in facilities where they are deprived of their liberty. Children deprived of their liberty can be vulnerable and may have additional disadvantages such as disability or mental health problems. The Ombudsman is committed to ensuring that whatever the settings in which children and young people are held, they are protected and their welfare is safeguarded.

Throughout this document, the term 'child' or 'children' is used to refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Key Principles

Whilst undertaking a monitoring visit, monitors will always act within the international legal framework and standards relevant in the context of the deprivation of liberty of children to:

- Protect the best interest of the child
- Protect all children from any form or risk of violence or abuse
- Protect the welfare of the child
- Ensure the fullest achievable participation of children
- Ensure the right of children to education, rehabilitation and effective reintegration into society

Monitor Role and Responsibilities

1. The recruitment and selection process for monitors will ensure that those appointed have the necessary skills, experience and vetting to be able to work with children safely and competently to meet the requirements of their role.

2. All new monitors must read the Kazakhstan Ombudsman for Children's Rights monitoring toolkit handbooks one, two and three before commencing their first monitoring visit. Monitors will be required to operate to the procedures and standards outlined in the handbooks. Particular attention is drawn to the guidelines for interviewing children detailed in Handbook Two.
3. Monitors must complete Toolkit based training before assuming their monitoring role and responsibilities.
4. Where monitors appear to or are alleged to have breached the requirements of this Policy, or where a complaint is received about the conduct of a monitor, an investigation will be carried out by the Ombudsman with her support staff / organisations and the monitor will be interviewed and given the opportunity to give their account and provide any related information. Where breaches are evidenced, appropriate action will be taken. This may involve additional training or mentoring. Where warranted, a monitor will be removed from their monitoring role.

All monitors and Ombudsman / NGO staff who support them will ensure that:

- Their behaviour promotes a safeguarding culture and that they do not wittingly or unwittingly collude in covering up potential child abuse.
- Children are treated with dignity and their protection is paramount, regardless of any visible or invisible individual differences (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability.)
- Children are listened to understand their views and concerns and respond effectively to them. The Ombudsman guidelines for interviewing children are understood and implemented by all monitors and support staff.
- The views and concerns of children inform monitoring visit working practices, specifically the areas which need special attention during a visit.
- They take seriously, any concerns raised by children, staff, parents/carers or any others, about the well-being or care received by children.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

Monitors will, during their work, see, hear and read things which may cause them to consider that a child or children has / have experienced harm or is at risk of harm (this includes risk to an unborn child.) This could involve various possible scenarios which indicate there may be a safeguarding or child protection risk: from another child: from an

adult (e.g. a family member or external person with access to the visited facility) or from one or more members of staff

In any circumstances where monitors believe that one or more children may have experienced or be at risk of harm, they must act swiftly and appropriately to report any suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect to the Ombudsman, who will take the necessary action.

All information received by a monitoring group must be treated confidentially. Breaches of confidentiality can have serious consequences both for the person interviewed and the credibility of the Ombudsman and monitoring groups.

All confidential information should be held securely.

Where information must be shared because of child protection concerns, sharing should be strictly limited to appropriate professionals who need to know and all necessary child protection arrangements should be implemented immediately.

Monitor Signature

I have read and understood this Ethical Guidelines and Child Protection Policy. I have also read and understood the Kazakhstan Children's Rights Ombudsman Monitoring Toolkit Handbooks One, two and Three.

I undertake to operate to the standards, procedures and guidance provided in these documents and to attend monitor training events.

Name (Printed):

Signature:



With thanks to the Defence for Children International (DCI) Belgium and partners for use of material in the *Practical Guide to Monitoring places where children are deprived o*