

Procedure for Suspected Child Protection Concerns (Case Management)

Childaid Network encourages staff, volunteers, partner organizations, project stakeholders, and other external persons to report possible violations of child protection policy or other standards. Reports can be submitted via the reporting channels indicated on the website or directly to the Child Protection Team of Childaid Network and can, if desired, be made anonymously.

Persons who provide information in good faith do not have to fear any disadvantages. Childaid Network protects reporting persons from discrimination or retaliation. All reports are treated confidentially and are reviewed exclusively by the responsible persons.

Principles of Case Management

In dealing with suspected cases, Childaid Network follows clear principles:

- The protection of the affected person is always the highest priority.
- Reports of suspicion are reviewed promptly.
- Information is treated confidentially (“need-to-know” principle).
- All steps are documented.
- If necessary, external expert bodies are involved and legal requirements are observed.

1. Receipt of a Report of Suspicion

Reports of suspicion via the website or via the email addresses kindesschutz@childaid.net and childprotection@childaid.net are forwarded directly to three responsible persons:

- the Child Protection Officer,
- the Child Protection Advisor,
- the Child Protection Officer of the Board.

All reports are initially treated with strict confidentiality. For processing, a case management team consisting of three specially trained staff members at the central office in Germany is formed. In cases in project countries, a child protection focal person from the respective country teams is additionally involved in an advisory capacity.

2. Immediate Measures to Protect the Child

The first step always consists of ensuring the protection of the affected child or adolescent.

The case management team works – where appropriate – with persons in the child’s environment, such as local project partners, family members, or the reporting persons. The aim is to exclude further risk and, if necessary, to initiate immediate protective measures, such as restricting contact with the accused person or organizing medical or psychosocial support.

3. Initial Clarification of Facts and Assessment

After protective measures have been initiated, the case management team gathers information about the incident and speaks with relevant parties or possible witnesses.

On this basis, an initial internal assessment is carried out. It is examined whether the suspicion is plausible, whether Childaid Network is responsible, and whether further investigation is necessary.

This leads to three possible outcomes:

- The suspicion proves to be unfounded or too vague, and the procedure is terminated.
- Childaid Network is not responsible, and the case is transferred to another organization.
- A relevant suspicion exists, and the investigation is continued.

4. In-depth Investigation

If further clarification is necessary, the case management team conducts additional interviews and gathers further information or evidence. If required, external expert bodies are involved. The “need-to-know” principle continues to apply: only persons whose involvement is necessary for clarifying the case and does not endanger the protection of the child are included.

5. Decision and Measures

After completion of the investigation, the case management team assesses the facts and recommends further steps.

Possible outcomes include:

- **No confirmed suspicion:** The procedure is terminated, and, if applicable, measures for rehabilitation are initiated.
- **Violation of internal policies:** The board decides on appropriate measures, such as warning, formal reprimand, or termination of cooperation.
- **Serious or criminal violation:** The case may be referred to the competent authorities. In project countries, cooperation takes place with the responsible local authorities.

6. Documentation and Learning from Cases

The entire process is documented and stored in a protected area accessible only to authorized persons. In addition, the case management team evaluates each case in terms of “lessons learned” in order to continuously improve prevention measures and procedures.

7. Information of Involved Parties

After completion of the procedure, the case management team informs the involved persons of the results of the investigation – where necessary and while maintaining confidentiality.

Handling of Minor Violations

Not every boundary violation automatically leads to a formal case management procedure. In the case of minor violations, an attempt is first made to clarify the situation through a timely, constructive feedback discussion.

If the observing person does not feel able to conduct such a discussion, they can inform the Child Protection Team. The incident is documented confidentially in order to identify possible repetitions at an early stage.