



# Code of Ethics

## Child-Help vzw Values: The Keystone of Our Moral and Financial Integrity

In accordance with the Child-Help vzw Integrity Charter, this Code of Ethics (“Code”) applies to all employees, directors and volunteers of Child-Help vzw. The Code forms a binding part of the terms and conditions of their engagement with Child-Help vzw and must be signed at the start of their employment or mandate.<sup>1</sup>

The Code is introduced to new employees by the organisation's Coordinator upon hiring and is revisited during annual performance appraisals. Collaboration agreements with partners describe the essential elements of the Code to ensure our partners also implement them.

This Code is the ethical compass that guides and sustains our organisation in working towards its vision and mission.

In this spirit, Child-Help vzw is committed to the following values:

1. Dignity and respect
2. Integrity
3. Professionalism and teamwork
4. Inclusiveness and engagement
5. Partnerships
6. Open communication and ethical fundraising

### 1. Dignity and respect

We value the inherent worth and rights of every person, upholding the broader spectrum of human rights and recognising the dignity of everyone. Our commitment to human rights, particularly the rights of children, is paramount. Anti-discrimination and anti-racism are central to this commitment. We avoid and prohibit any form of discrimination based on nationality, national or ethnic origin, skin colour, sex, gender identity, gender expression, gender reassignment, gender characteristics, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, maternity, paternity, co-maternity, co-paternity,

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Child-Help vzw general assembly are also expected to act in accordance with the values in the Code of Ethics when carrying out their mandate. While they are not required to sign the Code, as per the Integrity Charter, but the Code is communicated clearly to them.

adoption, medically assisted reproduction, physical or genetic characteristics, age, religion or belief, political opinion, trade union belief, marital status, health condition (e.g. HIV/AIDS), disability, language, social origin, ability or other status.<sup>2</sup> We also ensure an inclusive workplace where everyone feels welcome, heard and able to actively participate.

Any form of exploitation, abuse or harassment, whether sexual or otherwise, particularly against children, is a grave violation of human dignity and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The following definitions of exploitation, abuse and harassment, as adapted from the UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and used by OECD-DAC, are applicable:

**Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, trust or unequal power for purposes (sexual or otherwise), including, but not limited to, obtaining economic, social or political benefits through the exploitation of another.

**Abuse:** Actual or threatened physical and/or verbal transgressive behaviour, whether of a sexual or non-sexual nature, by physical or verbal force, coercion or exploitation of unequal power dynamics.

**Harassment:** Unacceptable and unwelcome behaviour, including, but not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favours, and sexual, verbal or physical behaviour or gestures which are offensive, humiliating or could reasonably be perceived as such.

In all our deeds and actions, we avoid putting our own health and that of others at risk. Safety is a daily priority.

Decent work, encompassing adequate remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and fair treatment, is a value applied in the working relationship between Child-Help vzw and its employees (including trainees) and in the contracts and assignments Child-Help vzw entrusts to external service providers.

Child-Help vzw expects its local partners to comply with all relevant local legislation for employers, including social legislation, health regulations, pension provisions and taxation laws.

## 2. Integrity

Employees and directors of Child-Help vzw are vigilant to avoid any potential personal conflicts of interest and refrain from engaging in activities that could create such conflicts. This ensures they can fulfil their duties (e.g. procurement, recruitment, allocation of funds, partnerships and projects) impartially and objectively while adhering to internal procedures and relevant regulations. Personal interests encompass affiliations with family members, acquaintances, friends, owned organisations or businesses, political entities or other relationships. Any semblance of a conflict of interest must be avoided, and appropriate measures will be taken to resolve such issues if they arise.

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<sup>2</sup> The listed grounds of discrimination are the legal grounds of discrimination contained in Belgian anti-discrimination legislation: the Gender Act, the Anti-Racism Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Child-Help vzw's funds are managed responsibly in accordance with its financial policy, including procedures for purchasing goods and services, and in compliance with relevant regulations. Fraud and corruption are not tolerated under any circumstances.

We treat the information we have at our disposal appropriately, ensuring that confidential or sensitive information remains protected, even after the end of employment or directorship.

### **3. Professionalism and teamwork**

Child-Help vzw uses available resources as effectively and efficiently as possible. We apply our expertise and competencies to fulfil our organisation's mission, ensuring resources are used appropriately and aligned with our objectives.

Child-Help vzw collaborates with its umbrella organisation, Child-Help International, and other Child-Help members to continually enhance the quality of its processes and services.

Child-Help vzw strives to be a learning organisation and encourages learning at all levels of the organisation.

The accounts of Child-Help vzw are audited annually by a company auditor.

Child-Help vzw produces a comprehensive annual report (substantive and financial) and distributes it through its communication channels.

Underlying our values is a deep belief in the power of teamwork. We actively encourage collaboration among all stakeholders and networks, recognising that collective efforts strengthen our impact and improve the well-being of the people and communities we support.

### **4. Inclusiveness and engagement**

We embrace the principle 'Nothing about us without us' by actively involving the people we serve in shaping policies and implementing all aspects of our activities. This inclusive approach ensures that the voices and perspectives of those we serve are central to our decision-making processes.

Our commitment to meaningful engagement and empathy extends beyond rhetoric. We promote peer-to-peer counselling, support parents and facilitate collaboration with support groups. Together, we work to influence national-level policies, championing the principle that those directly affected should have a say in decisions that impact them.

### **5. Partnerships**

Child-Help vzw and its partners co-own programmes, and the shared objectives guide the design of those programmes.

Partner relationships are equal and based on mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy and shared objectives.

Child-Help vzw works to build long-term partner relationships that evolve and deliver increasing value over time.

Child-Help vzw strives to cooperate with other actors to increase the impact of its programmes and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its actions.

## **6. Open communication and ethical fundraising**

Child-Help vzw supports an honest and open communication culture, where employees and directors are encouraged to share their opinions and vision. Child-Help vzw applies the following guiding principles for choosing and checking images (e.g. photos) and messages before publication:

1. When soliciting public donations, personalised messages linking individuals and organisations in need directly to prospective donors should be limited to specific cases approved by the association. Exceptions may apply when the message clearly states that it is a fictitious case based on real facts.
2. The message, both in text and illustrations, must respect human dignity and maintain sensitivity towards individuals receiving support. Any use of images depicting human suffering should be limited to illustrating established and verifiable facts.
3. The message should not reflect or quote any testimony, statement or recommendation that does not reflect reality or the experience of the person concerned.
4. For Child-Help vzw external publications, facts, opinions and images are based on first-hand observation or sources known to Child-Help vzw and deemed reliable.

Child-Help vzw is a member of the Association of Ethics in Fundraising ([RE-EF asbl/vzw – Ethische Fondsenwerving vzw](#)) and adheres to its Code of Ethics and Internal Regulations.

Child-Help vzw operates an internal policy that respects the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).