

# INCLUSION AND MUTUAL RESPECT POLICY WITHIN THE RED CROSS YOUTH

This Inclusion and Mutual Respect Policy applies to everyone within the Red Cross Youth organization. The regulations apply to the whole organization, including in all our interactions with each other, both in-person and online. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that URK is a safe community for everyone involved. The policy contains guidelines for how to interact with each other.

It is the activity manager's or the consultant's responsibility to inform volunteers of these policies.

## Part 1: GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSION AND RESPECT IN THE RED CROSS YOUTH

The Red Cross Youth follows the Red Cross' seven principles. These principles are the foundation of our work within the organization and in situations where we represent the organization. You can read more about the principles [here](#). Everyone, regardless of ethnicity, creed, political affiliation, gender and gender expression, sexuality, or additional needs, are welcome in the Red Cross Youth, if they uphold our shared policies and follow these principles.

### Regulations for a safe community

We always respect each other's boundaries, including during activities, at events or parties and in everyday life when we meet in relation to or outside of the Red Cross Youth. We show understanding and always accept if an individual chooses to withdraw from an activity or specific situation. We do not engage in activities that are potentially offensive, abusive or that disrespect the boundaries of others.

We condemn abusive behaviour and consider it a valid reason for exclusion.

We define abusive behaviour as:

- Bullying or harassment
- Discrimination (sexism, racism, or other prejudice)
- Assault or sexual harassment

In addition to being directed towards individuals, abusive behaviour can also target groups. An example of this is derogatory remarks regarding ethnicity or sexuality. In the Red Cross Youth organization, we do not accept abusive behaviour, physical or verbal, under any circumstances and regardless of whether there was a conscious intention to offend or abuse.

We always uphold the law according to Danish legislation. For international activities in the Danish Red Cross Youth, the same applies to the legislation of the country in which the activity takes place. Consumption and/or possession of illegal substances is forbidden in the Red Cross Youth. Failure to uphold this rule will lead to exclusion from the organization.

## Regulations during events and arrangements

It is essential that everyone feels able to take part during Red Cross Youth events. As such, the organization must take the individual needs of participants into account, for example with regards to food and/or washing facilities.

As a rule, the organization does not segregate by gender, with few notable exceptions (such as girl or boy only clubs). Requests for single-gender sleeping arrangements at events or weekend activities should be communicated to the organiser and must be respected.

Alcohol is permitted at certain events held for volunteers, but there should always be alcohol-free alternatives available. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure that the standards of the Inclusion and Mutual Respect Policy are upheld.

## The Representative Committee

If you witness behaviour that fails to uphold this policy, you are always welcome to contact URK's Representative Committee, regardless of whether you were the target of this behaviour, a witness to it or the individual responsible for it. If you have a concern regarding a child or suspect that the regulations regarding contact with children have been violated, you should contact URK's Secretariat Office directly.

The Red Cross Youth Representative Committee consists of four members, two of which are selected by the National Board (and at least one of whom must also be a member of the National Board). The other two members are selected by the Secretariat Office, one of which is a staff representative. Further information regarding the Committee and how to contact them can be found [here](#).

All representatives, URK employees and members of the National Board have a duty of confidentiality. You can also contact the consultant associated with your activity or your local department.

Do not worry if you are unsure who to contact – we are always ready to help direct you to the right person.

## Disclosure Certification

Within the Red Cross Youth, criminal record disclosure certificates for working with children ("børneattester" in Danish) are requested for all volunteers and staff members before joining a URK activity or employment in our Secretariat Office. We require this from everyone in URK, as all of us are expected to be in spaces or situations where children and young people are present. It is the activity manager's responsibility to collect disclosure certificates. Find out how to collect them [here](#).

These certificates should be renewed every two years.

## **PART 2: GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS**

The Red Cross Youth has a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect, as well as to react if concerns surrounding a child or young person's welfare should arise. Furthermore, the organization is responsible for protecting volunteers against having their actions misconstrued, having suspicions raised against them or being subjected to false allegations. These guidelines have been put in place for the protection of volunteers.

The following regulations apply during all interactions between volunteers and children under the age of 18 in the Red Cross Youth, with the exception of for volunteers also under the age of 18. In such cases, the general regulations apply.

All URK staff and volunteers are required to follow these guidelines. The regulations are built on the Red Cross' rules and regulations for contact with children, as part of the Child Safety policy of the Danish Red Cross.

## Rules for interactions with children

- Everyone associated with the Red Cross Youth must follow the current legislation in relation to working with children. Physical or psychological abuse of any nature is forbidden.
- According to Danish criminal law ("Straffeloven"), individuals holding any position with a duty of care are forbidden from engaging in sexual relations with a volunteer or participant under the age of 18. This means, for example, that local representatives and activity managers are not allowed to engage in sexual relations with volunteers under the age of 18 who are associated with said activity. Moreover, a volunteer must not engage in a sexual relationship with a participant under the age of 18.
- Volunteers and staff in the Red Cross Youth may not, as a rule, be left alone with one or more children. Exceptions apply if being alone together is part of the activity (see information regarding one-on-one activities on pages 7-8), or in special circumstances if dispensations have been given with respect to concrete situations, such as on URK holiday camps (see part 3: activity specific guidelines).
- When a volunteer or member of staff takes a child aside to talk to them, should the child require it, this should take place where they can be observed by other volunteers or staff members.
- Should an acute situation arise, leaving no alternative to being alone with a child, the activity manager should be informed. This can arise, for example, if a child runs off.
- Doors must always be left unlocked whenever volunteers/staff and children interact. This is both for the protection of the children and of the volunteers/staff members, as locked doors can give rise to suspicion.
- Volunteers and members of staff are not permitted to sleep in the same room as children as a rule. On holiday and weekend camps, for example, staff and volunteers sleep in separate accommodation to the children. If necessary, more than one volunteer or member of staff should always be present when sleeping in the same room as children.
- External parties are not permitted to be left alone with the children.
- Volunteers or members of staff are not allowed to have contact with children participating in a URK activity outside of the remit of that activity.

## Excursions and transport

As a volunteer or member of staff you should be aware that:

- If an activity will be taking place at a different location than usual (e.g., a museum, cinema, or playground), parents should be informed. This can be done by giving the child an information slip to take home or by sharing a post on the relevant community Facebook page.
- If you are going on a more substantial excursion (e.g., to a holiday park) or on a trip including overnight accommodation (e.g., weekend camps), signed permission from parents or official guardians is required. If multiple excursions happen within one activity (e.g., on a holiday camp), only one signed permission slip is needed.
- If you need to transport a child by car, a minimum of two volunteers must be present in the vehicle. Permission to drive the child must also be collected from their parent or guardian.
- Copies of permission slips can be found [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Secretariat Office.

## Guidelines for physical contact

As a volunteer or member of staff you should be aware that:

- Physical contact can be misinterpreted or be entirely outside of the comfort zone of some children. Physical touch during play or use of a strong grip may be perceived differently by a child and/or other adults than it was intended.
- Inappropriate behaviour and abuse can take place between children. It is therefore important that all activities in groups are monitored and that members of staff and/or volunteers are always present.
- Every child's right to privacy should be respected. Volunteers should be especially aware in situations involving getting changed or using the bathroom.

## Communication guidelines

As a volunteer or member of staff you should be aware:

- That the use of inappropriate language or behaviour that offends, discriminates or is culturally insensitive is not permitted. Be aware that some children may have difficulty understanding irony or sarcasm.
- Remember to always listen to the children and their parents/guardians and give them the necessary time and space to share what is on their minds.
- To include children in the planning and execution of activities appropriate to their age and maturity level, ensuring that children have a say and their rights are upheld.
- To engage in activities suitable for the children's age and development.
- To be open to conversations pertaining to difficult subjects (i.e., violence, bullying, abuse). Be attentive, so the child feels listened to. In some cases, action will need to be taken in response to what the child shares. Read more on this under "Acting on concerns".
- Refrain from speaking negatively about other children, their families, and other volunteers. If you feel the need to discuss something relating to a child or their family with fellow volunteers, be aware that this should be done in a trusted forum without children or parents present.
- Children have the right to be protected from violent or traumatic stories and conversations.
- Children should not be used as interpreters/translators.

## Boundaries

As a volunteer and/or member of staff you should be aware of:

- The need for regular discussions relating to the treatment of others, boundaries, and roles, for example, at volunteer or supervision meetings.
- Your right to assert your own boundaries if children or adults overstep your limits.
- That, as a volunteer, your patience can be tested when working with children, which is valid. Be honest with yourself and your fellow volunteers so you can process frustrations in a child-free space.

## Social Media Rules and Guidelines

In relation to social media usage, as a volunteer and member of staff, you should be aware that:

- Volunteers and members of staff should not connect with children on social media.
- Communication in relation to an activity is allowed in groups on social media. Remember to ensure that personal information is not shared.
- Private chats with children are not permitted. If a child contacts you, you must either refrain from answering or end the conversation appropriately.

## Guidelines for the use of photos

Photos are good memories which you can share. Furthermore, they are essential to the organization's documentation and advocacy work.

- Permission from the child should always be sought, either verbally with a witness or in written form before photos are taken and used. Parents or guardians should sign an official Red Cross Youth consent form whenever photos are used in connection with press releases, communication materials or social media. (Read more in the appendix "Consent for Photos").
- Use of computers, mobile phones, cameras and/or social media should be appropriate and focused on protecting children and their rights
- All volunteers and members of staff have a duty of confidentiality. This means that no one can give out sensitive information pertaining to a child.
- If there is doubt over how a situation should be managed, any consultant from the Secretariat Office can be contacted.
- An exception to the duty of confidentiality arises in cases where there is a duty to notify municipality authorities about the welfare of a child.
- An exception also applies in relation to Red Cross Youth's internal confidentiality. Volunteers and members of staff may occasionally need to vent or discuss how to handle a particular situation. This should be done in a confidential space, either on the phone or in-person. Social media and other messaging platforms are not confidential.
- Find out more about the duty of confidentiality in the Red Cross' appendix regarding Confidentiality Agreements.

## Acting on Concerns

You are obliged to react if you are concerned about a child or receive information about a child in the need of assistance. Concerns can arise if a child tells you directly about something troubling, or if you have an instinctive feeling about a child.

You should never feel alone in taking responsibility. Speak to others in your group regarding concerns after a shift or at a meeting. You can always contact a consultant, who will be ready to help and guide you. If you do not know who to contact, you can mail [info@urk.dk](mailto:info@urk.dk) for further information.

### Duty to Notify the Authorities

- Occasionally, concerns can arise of a nature which requires you to notify the appropriate authorities. As a volunteer or member of staff in Red Cross Youth, you are subject to the general "duty to notify", as with all members of the Danish public. This means that you have an obligation to notify the municipality if you are concerned about a child's safety. Notification of the authorities is called "underretning" in Danish.
- You can either notify the municipality yourself or seek help from the Secretariat Office. The most important thing to remember is that you are not alone in this. You can read more about your obligation to notify the authorities, and what to do if you are concerned about a child, [here](#).
- If it is an acute concern for a child or young person outside of the municipality's opening hours, you can call Den Sociale Døgnvagt using the phone number 114. (The call will be redirected via the police, who will put you in contact with Den Sociale Døgnvagt)

## When we work with external partners

- External partners and other short-term visitors who come into contact with children must be made aware of guidelines and regulations. They must also sign a statement declaring that they are aware of and will comply with the Red Cross' rules and regulations surrounding contact with children. In some instances, the collection of criminal record disclosure certificates ("børneattester") is required.
- Find out more in the appendix *Tro-og-love-erklæring*.

## Risk Assessments Evaluation

- When starting a new activity with children, a risk assessment should always be completed. These assessments play a role in determining how activities are organised and in prioritising child safety.
- Continuous re-evaluation of the risk assessment should be carried out. The risk assessment should be completed by the consultant or the activity manager.

## Guidelines for one-on-one activities

Some activities require one-on-one contact with the children. This can be in cases where children otherwise would not be able to take part or where children are in specific need of building one-on-one relationships. One-on-one interactions can be valuable for the children but can also be sensitive or tricky to navigate. It is therefore important that our volunteers know the guidelines and regulations related to one-on-one activities in the Red Cross Youth.

It is always the volunteer's responsibility that the regulations are followed – not the child's.

## Permission from parents or guardians

Building a one-on-one relation to a child is permitted in connection with one-on-one activities in the Red Cross Youth, provided that a parent or guardian has given permission if the child is under 15 years. The parent/guardian must sign an official Red Cross Youth consent form before one-on-one contact can be established. Without signed permission, one-on-one contact is not permitted if the child is under 15 years old. Children aged 15 years or older can consent themselves. In such cases, guardians need only be informed.

## Setting boundaries

A one-on-one relation in the Red Cross Youth is a voluntary professional relationship, rather than a personal one. It is important, as a volunteer, that you are aware of your boundaries with regards to this relation:

- Speak openly to the child regarding when you are available and if there are certain topics you wish to keep private. Think about how to respond if a conversation about any of these topics should arise or if you do not want to take part in a specific activity.
- In creating this relation, you are contributing access to yourself, so you are free to be open and honest. Refrain, however, from sharing personal information (such as problems in your private life).
- Visits and meetings should always be a part of the Red Cross Youth activity and should be within the framework of the project.
- The child must be able to ask questions to other people related to the activity (a volunteer who is not their one-on-one partner/mentor). Always ensure the child is aware of who they can contact if they are dissatisfied or unsure about something relating to the relation or activity.



## Educating Volunteers

Volunteers should always be prepared before becoming involved in any one-on-one activity. The methods used in recruitment and education of volunteers should always be approved by the Secretariat Office.

### Always avoid being alone with a child under the age of 18

- Keep to public spaces where the risk of being alone is at a minimum, e.g., a library or a park.
- It is not permitted to invite the child to your home – even if other people will be present.
- If you visit the child at home, permission should be sought from their parents. Refrain closing the door of the room you are in with the child.
- Sleepovers with the child are not permitted – even though other people are present (e.g., parents or siblings)
- If the activity takes place online, the child's parents must be at home and doors must be kept open.
- If you are alone in a car will transporting the child, signed permission from the parents is needed.

Sometimes it can be difficult to completely avoid alone-time in a one-on-one relation. This could for example be during a walk when no one else is nearby. It is important to remember, as a volunteer, that you have done everything you can to minimise the risk of being alone by choosing a public space to meet in.

### Sharing Contact information

When sharing contact information is required, such as during mentoring, permission must be given by parents/guardians. You and the child must also agree on the terms of communication.

## PART 3: ACTIVITY-SPECIFIC RULES

### Holiday camps

#### Tucking in

On holiday camps, there are volunteers who are responsible for putting specific children to bed, as this is an important part of building positive relationships a strong community feeling at the camp. Tucking in the children can in some instances require being alone with the child due to the layout and size of the room. This goes against our policy of never being alone with one or more children. An exception is made for such scenarios on holiday camps, but the door must always be open or ajar.

#### Needing space

On holiday camps, some children may need to withdraw into their own space, for example, at mealtimes. In such cases, a volunteer may need to move to another room alone with a child, which goes against our policy of never being alone with one or more children. An exception is made for such scenarios on holiday camps, but, as above, the door must always be kept open or ajar.

In these situations, the volunteer should attempt wherever possible to withdraw to a space in the same area or which is accessible to others (such as the kitchen, which is regularly used by others). It should not be a room a long distance away from where other volunteers are present.

## Questions?

If you have any questions in relation to the Inclusion and Mutual Respect Policy, please contact the Representative Committee or the Secretariat Office. You can find the contact information for the Representative Committee [here](#), and the Secretariat Office on [info@urk.dk](mailto:info@urk.dk).

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