

Guiding Principles In Child Protection and Safe Guarding.

Best interest of the child: The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions that directly or indirectly affect children. The best interests principle establishes that all girls and boys have the right to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives, including in the identification of their best interests.

Non-discrimination: Non-discrimination entails that policies, procedures and programmes are not discriminatory and that refugee, displaced and stateless children have access to national child protection systems, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or disability.

Child's opinion/right to be heard: should be listened to and given due weight in relation to the child's age and maturity. Children must be kept informed about plans being made for them. This includes decisions about placement and care, tracing and reunification. Programmes should actively engage children in the prevention of and responses to separation.

Family unity: Family unity is a fundamental principle of international law. The integrity of the refugee family is a legal principle and a humanitarian goal; it is also an essential framework of protection and a key to the success of durable solutions that can restore a refugee to something approximating a normal life. All children have the right to a family and families have the right to care for their children.

Evolving capacities: This concept not only recognises that adults should listen to children, and their views reflected in decisions and actions taken on behalf of children, but also that "we promote, respect and protect children's own capacities to take responsibility for those decisions and action they are competent to take for themselves."

Do no harm: The principle requires that actors consider the child's family, culture and social situation and conduct actions, procedures and programmes in a manner that does not put the child at risk of harm. The participation of boys and girls in decisions that affect their lives will be planned and facilitated in a responsible and ethical manner with due regard to confidentiality.

Community participation: Refugee community participation (including both men and women) should be promoted in all sectors, by building on the community's own resources as much as possible and encouraging individual, family and group self-reliance

Confidentiality is an ethical principle, which requires that service providers protect information gathered about clients and agree only to share information about a client's case with their explicit permission. All written information is maintained in a confidential place in locked files and only non-identifying information is written down on case files. Maintaining confidentiality means service providers never discuss case details with family or friends, or with colleagues whose knowledge of the abuse is deemed unnecessary. If information has to be shared, it should be authorised by the Head of the agency or the head of the unit within

each agency. The principle of confidentiality also includes maintaining privacy when dealing with the media, and restrictions on taking photographs and making video recordings of children.

Informed consent: Informed consent is the voluntary agreement of an individual who has the legal capacity to give consent. To provide informed consent, the individual must have the capacity and maturity to know about and understand the services being offered and be legally able to give their consent. Parents are typically responsible for giving consent for their child to receive services until the child reaches 18 years of age. In some settings, older adolescents are also legally able to provide consent in lieu of, or in addition to, their parents.

Code of conduct: Codes of Conduct serve as an illustrative guide for staff to make ethical decisions in their professional lives, and at times in their private lives. All staff working with children will have read, understood, and signed the Code of Conduct, and will take part in periodic Code of Conduct refresher trainings.