

## COMPILATION OF GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

**Summary:** The following guidelines are for journalists to use when interviewing children. Journalistic activity which touches on the lives and welfare of children should always be carried out with appreciation of the vulnerable situation of children. Journalists and media organisations shall strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs.

### Ethical guidelines for reporting on children

- ☒ Do not publish a story or an image which might put the child, siblings or peers at risk even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.
- ☒ Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgmental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate a child's pain and grief from traumatic events.
- ☒ Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
- ☒ avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children.
- ☒ No staging: Do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.
- ☒ Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking with a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
- ☒ Obtain permission from the child and his or her guardian for all interviews, videotaping and, when possible, for documentary photographs. When possible and appropriate, this permission should be in writing. Permission must be obtained in circumstances that ensure that the child and guardian are not coerced in any way and that they understand that they are part of a story that might be disseminated locally and globally. This is usually only ensured if the permission is obtained in the child's language and if the decision is made in consultation with an adult the child trusts.
- ☒ Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without pressure.
- ☒ Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.
- ☒ Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as: a. A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, b. A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse, c. HIV positive, or living with AIDS, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed consent, d. Charged or convicted of a crime.
- ☒ Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.
- ☒ When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.

### *Organisation:*

[Child Rights International Network \(/en/library/organisations/child-rights-international-network\)](/en/library/organisations/child-rights-international-network)

### *Articles:*

[Article 19: Protection from abuse and neglect \(/en/articles/article-19-protection-abuse-and-neglect\)](/en/articles/article-19-protection-abuse-and-neglect)

### *Web:*

<http://www.unicef.org>

### *Link :*

### *Countries*

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