

# Code of Ethics and Conduct

## Child International Press Association (CIPA)

We, the Members and Associates of Children’s International Press Association (CIPA) hereby adopt the following Code for print and online media journalism (together referred to as “the code of conduct”).

### Short version:

#### Our role in society

1. We are a movement for freedom and justice. We are thought leaders, fighting for truth with our pen and camera. We are honest, critical and independent.

#### How we behave

2. We are responsible for what we publish! We report with credibility and integrity. We are true to our convictions.

#### Handling our sources

3. Sources and fact-checking are everything to us. We check the facts on what we publish for independence, credibility and truthfulness. We never pay for information. We quote them accurately, and use photos and names with respect

#### Publication rules

4. We never make assumptions or presumptions, or discriminate. We consider how our publication may affect others. We are always open to feedback and comments.

Code of Conduct CIPA			
	Think	Feel	Act (do)
Our role	We understand the role of the media in democracy guards freedom truth and justice	We are honest, critical and independent	We are thought leaders with our pen and camera
How we behave	We are true to our convictions of freedom truth and justice	We always consider credibility and integrity	We take responsibility for what we publish
Our sources	Sources need to be knowledgeable but can be anonymous to protect their identity	We quote sources accurately, and use photos and names with respect	We check our facts and publish independently, with credibility and truthfulness
How we publish	We never make assumptions, presumptions or discriminate	We consider how our publication effects others	We are always open to feedback and comments

Our code of conduct is covered by the Press Guidelines for Reporters of the International Federation of Journalists, the UNICEF's Principles on Reporting about Children and the UN *Declaration of Human Rights*, specifically articles 12 and 13.

## Context

The media exists to serve society. The freedom of the media and freedom of expression provides for independent eye on the forces that shape our societies, and media freedom is essential to realising the promise of democracy.

A free media enables citizens to make informed judgments on their issues, this role of media is recognised internationally by the United Nations Declaration Articles 12 and 13

Similarly, the rights of expression and voice for children is guaranteed internationally in the United Nations Article 12 and 13.

The international guidelines are based on the UNICEF principles on reporting about children as well as the press guidelines for reporters of the International Federation of Journalists: Also known as the Bordeaux Declaration, the principles were first adopted in 1954 by the IFJ's World Congress and amended in 1986. They have formed the bedrock of the IFJ's uncompromising stand in defence of a quality and ethical journalism.

The same principles will be held to the children themselves as thought leaders and media makers.

## Longer version<sup>1</sup>:

This international Declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists, either adult professionals, but also any young people whose views will be shared in the media either print or digital media. All those engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events are held to these principles:

1. Respect for truth, and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of any journalist, adult or child.
2. In pursuance of this duty, the journalist will always defend the principles of **freedom** in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism
3. The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
4. The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.
5. The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
6. The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
7. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
8. The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following:
  - a. plagiarism;
  - b. malicious misrepresentation;
  - c. calumny, slander, libel, unfounded accusations;
  - d. acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.
9. Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognize in professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.

As journalists we commit ourselves to the highest standards, to maintain credibility and keep the trust of the public. This means always striving for truth, avoiding unnecessary harm, reflecting a multiplicity of voices in our coverage of events, showing a special concern for children and other vulnerable groups, and exhibiting sensitivity to the cultural customs of their readers and the subjects of their reportage, and acting independently.

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<sup>1</sup> The international guidelines are based on the principles of the IFJ: Also known as the Bordeaux Declaration, the principles were first adopted in 1954 by the IFJ's World Congress and amended in 1986. They have formed the bedrock of the IFJ's uncompromising stand in defence of a quality and ethical journalism.

### **When children are being reported about<sup>2</sup> UNICEF principles (Six principles)**

- 1.** Respect the dignity and rights of every child in every circumstance.
- 2.** In interviewing (and reporting on) children, pay special attention to each child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their opinions heard, to participate in decisions affecting them and to be protected from harm and retribution.
- 3.** Protect the best interests of each child over any other consideration, including advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights.
- 4.** When trying to determine the best interests of a child, give due weight to the child's right to have their views taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity.
- 5.** Consult those closest to the child's situation and best able to assess it about the political, social and cultural ramifications of any reportage.
- 6.** Do not publish a story or an image that might put the child, their siblings or peers at risk, even when their identities are changed, obscured or not used.

### **Six guidelines for interviewing children**

- 1.** Do no harm to any child; avoid questions, attitudes or comments that are judgemental, insensitive to cultural values, that place a child in danger or expose a child to humiliation, or that reactivate the pain of traumatic events.
- 2.** Do not discriminate in choosing children to interview because of their sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
- 3.** No staging: do not ask children to tell a story or take an action that is not part of their own history.
- 4.** Ensure that the child or guardian knows they are talking to a reporter. Explain the purpose of the interview and its intended use.
- 5.** 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.
- 6.** Pay attention to where and how the child is interviewed. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers. Try to make certain that children are comfortable and able to tell their story without outside pressure, including from the interviewer. In film, video and radio interviews, consider what the choice of visual or audio background might imply about the child and her or his life and story. Ensure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

For more information, see 'The Media and Children's Rights' website.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the United Nations guidelines on media reporting on children as the subject