



IBC CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

International Blue Cross (IBC) has a mission to prevent, treat and reduce substance use, abuse and dependency among the most vulnerable people around the world. Headquartered in Bern Switzerland, IBC is an international actor in the field of development cooperation and serves as the umbrella organization for its national member organizations. IBC has no regional offices but works with in-country partners.

The members are independent, non-political and non-denominational Christian associations that form a network that assists marginalised populations and people harmed by or at risk to be harmed by alcohol and drugs.

As a global organisation, IBC also implements international development cooperation programmes in the field of substance abuse in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Project activities are run in grass roots settings in various locations and include alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and counselling for people with substance abuse problems, as well as international policy advice and lobbying.

The seven core values of the International Blue Cross are: love, solidarity, excellence, respect, empowerment, inclusiveness and good governance.

➔ See IBC Standing Policies 1.3 Shared Values

Purpose

IBC has a common commitment to support staff and prevent misconduct. IBC drives personal and collective responsibility for upholding and promoting the highest ethical and professional standards in their work.

The main purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote greater accountability and outline the key responsibilities of staff. It seeks to protect all staff as well as every person and organisation whom IBC seeks to assist. It sets out the principles upon which we will base our decision making and actions, our expectations of all who represent IBC and our commitments to ensure effective action is taken when problems occur. All staff, volunteers and contracted parties will be familiar with this document and sign their commitment to this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct applies to all the work performed by all members of IBC and defines required behaviour of staff. The Code of Conduct and the policies in the annex are part of the IBC Operational Manual.

Standards of behaviour

To uphold and promote the highest ethical and professional standards, staff shall at all times:

- a. Respect and promote fundamental human rights without discrimination and act with integrity.
- b. Respect and abide by national and international laws.
- c. Treat all communities IBC seeks to assist (including crisis-affected populations, internally displaced persons and refugees), fairly and with respect, courtesy, dignity and according to international laws and standards.
- d. Positively represent IBC.
- e. Maintain an environment that prevents misconduct and promotes the implementation of this Code of Conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.
- f. Promote safe and confidential reporting of serious concerns about suspected misconduct following IBC policies and guidelines.
- g. Report immediately any knowledge, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of this Code of Conduct. Be aware that failure to disclose or knowingly withholding information about any reports, concerns or substantial suspicions of breaches of this Code of Conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary measures.
- h. Cooperate when requested with any investigation into alleged breaches related to this Code of Conduct.

IBC will not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representatives associated with the delivery of its work carrying out any form of harassment, abuse or exploitation. Such behaviour goes against the very beliefs, values and mission of our organisation. Safeguarding is a priority for IBC.

Awareness and overall responsibility

The Network Committee (NC) is the driving force behind this policy and its members are informed of all logged complaints without confidential details. NC provides the **secretariat** with the assistance to drive the IBC strategy, statutes and vision. All IBC employees are responsible for upholding, respecting and acting in accordance with this policy and two-yearly signing that they have updated their knowledge on the Code of Conduct.

Management provides direction, training and support to ensure employees and contracted partners understand their responsibilities and can apply this policy in their areas of work. The **Code of Conduct** states that it is the duty and the responsibility of all managers, employees and IBC representatives **to report** in line with this policy any suspicions or incidences of inappropriate behavior. IBC arranges case-by-case support for victims. Victims have access to medical and psychological support. **Survivors and victims** can choose if and when they would like to take up the support options available to them. Any breach of this Code of

Conduct is a form of misconduct, and, if substantiated, will lead to disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment and/or legal action if required.

The IBC Secretariat has a responsibility to ensure that all their respective employees, contracted parties and volunteers are aware of this Code of Conduct, that they understand what it means in concrete behavioural terms and how it applies to their programme context. All staff have an individual responsibility to familiarize themselves with this Code of Conduct and its purpose. The Code of Conduct will be a mandatory element during induction and all other relevant trainings and briefings.

This document automatically forms part of all contracts.

Annex

No.	Name of Policy	Validation Date
1	Anti Corruption Policy	Sep 4, 2013 Updates Mar 16, 2017, 5 Mar, 2019, Mar 15, 2024.
2	Gender Policy	Sep 4, 2013 Updates Dec 12, 2017, 5 Mar, 2019. Mar 15, 2024.
3	Fixed Asset Policy	Sep 4, 2013 Updates Dec 12, 2017, 5 Mar, 2019. Mar 15, 2024.
4	Anti Discrimination Policy	7 Jan, 2019, Update Mar 15, 2024.
5	Do No Harm Policy	1 Mar, 2019, Update Mar 15, 2024.
6	Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	Dec 10,2018, Update 8 Jun 2022
7	Policy on Protecting Children and Vulnerable People	Jan 7, 2019, Update Mar 15, 2024.
8	Complaints Policy	Dec 10, 2018, Update Jun 8, 2022
9	Personnel Regulation	10 Sep, 2014, Update14 Apr, 2021
10	Security Policy	Jan 7, 2019, Update Mar 15, 2024.

Complaints Procedure

IBC seeks to provide a safe environment through which stakeholders can voice a concern, without fear of reprisal or unfair treatment (Non-retaliation/ whistleblowing principle). These instructions will apply to the handling of complaints unless they are in conflict with compulsory Swiss legislation in which case IBC complies with mandatory legislation. The

Swiss law supplements the complaint procedure as necessary for handling the complaint. Complaints can be made in **English or in French** by filling in an online form, by e-mail, phone, in person, or by post. IBC website contains details of how to complain, including a sample complaints letter format. IBC implements a fast-track process for dealing with complaints about sexual exploitation and abuse and other gross misconduct issues.

IBC Secretariat
Complaints
Lindenrain 5a
3012 Bern, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 31 301 9804
Email: complaints@internationalbluecross.org
www.internationalbluecross.org

The complainant shall receive confirmation of receipt of the complaint, within 5 working days after IBC receives the complaint. The email, letter or phone call should give the following information:

- when and how the complaint was received;
- how the IBC has responded to the complaint so far and what it will do next;
- the name of the focal point or person responsible for the complaint;
- the person to contact with questions or feedback.

IBC is committed to responding to all complaints and concerns of abuse in **English or in French**. IBC has responsibility for this work, and carries out investigations, and delivers support to survivors of and victims according to the [IBC complaints policy](#). IBC will communicate the preliminary outcome of an investigation to the complainant(s), where possible, within 60 days after acknowledgment of the complaint. In complex or exceptional cases, the investigation period may take longer.

Any investigation may result in disciplinary hearings and disciplinary action. Thereby, IBC applies the disciplinary guidelines of ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and the national employment law. Allegation of gross misconduct will result in immediate suspension of this person from work until investigation is concluded. Gross misconduct includes issues such as corruption, sexual or any other form of exploitation, violence, abuse and criminal acts (<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/m/Acas-Code-of-Practice-1-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures.pdf>).

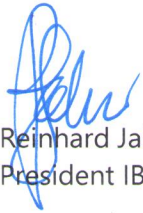
If the complainant(s) or subject(s) of complaint does not accept the outcome of the investigation, he/she/it/they can appeal the decision to the Network Committee (NC) using the IBC Complaints procedure as explained above. For a more detailed overview of the good practice on handling complaints we adapt the [ACT Alliance Complaints Procedure](#) (2016). Its guidelines are the basis for our process (<https://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Complaints-and-Investigation-Guidelines-July-2010-1.pdf>). As further support of the investigation of PSEA, IBC refers to Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance handbook Guidelines for Investigation (https://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Investigation-Guidelines-2015_English.pdf).

Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every 4 years or as necessary. IBC will review the operation of this Code of Conduct in consultation with the NC, employees and other stakeholders, where appropriate, in light of changing best practice and the law, amending the policy where required. IBC will take into account any lessons learned from handling complaints and to take into consideration any received feedback. IBC secretariat staff are responsible for the effective implementation of this Code of Conduct in all IBC work

This policy is valid from: 1st March 2019, Updated 15.3.2024

Signed:



Reinhard Jahn
President IBC



Anne Babb
General Secretary IBC

Signed as integral part of my employment contract:

Signature:

Name and date: