

Biennial Conference on Alternative Care for Children in Asia (BICON)

Safeguarding Policy 2023

Introduction

The Biennial Conference on Alternative Care for Children in Asia (BICON) organisers are committed to protecting everyone, in particular, the children and young people, who participate or engage in any way, in the BICON conference. A child is defined as being up to (and including) 18 years¹ and a youth is defined as being between 15 and 24 years².

The purpose of this policy is to provide all organising members and participants with the overarching principles which guide our approach to safeguarding in general, and our approach to child protection during the conference - in-person, using the online video conferencing platform and ongoing social media discussions and communications.

BICON also includes a 'code of conduct' – which all participants and speakers have to acknowledge and adhere to.

NOTE: it is expected that all participants adhere to the safeguarding policy and code of conduct not only during the conference but also for the duration of their stay in Nepal for the conference. BICON is proud of a long history of promoting care and protection for children and standards of care. The code of conduct must be maintained at all times.

BICON Safeguarding Measures

To ensure that safeguarding is central to the BICON conference – pre, during and post conference, BICON has allocated a central point of contact for any safeguarding issues who will record, respond, refer and follow-up on ALL safeguarding incidents that are reported before, during and after the conference.

The BICON Safeguarding e-mail address is safeguarding@bicon.asia – all complaints, concerns or safeguarding enquiries should be sent to this email address.

The allocated BICON Safeguarding representatives are:

- Mark Riley, Technical Lead India, Hope and Homes for Children
- Gurneet Kaur Kalra, Assistant Manager Research and Advocacy, Udayan Care

The following measures will be used to ensure that participants are protected before, during and after the BICON conference:

Pre and post-conference:

- All participants will sign up to the code of conduct prior to the conference.

¹ http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index_66834.html

² [YOUTH Definitions \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/youth-definitions)

- There will be a safeguarding briefing prior to the conference (online) which will also be available on the BICON webpage.
- Children and young people will be briefed prior to attending the conference– both on the code of conduct and on how to contact the BICON safeguarding representatives.
- ALL safeguarding incidents will be reported to the BICON safeguarding representatives on the email provided above.
- Abusive or inappropriate behaviour by ANY persons attending BICON organising meetings and on BICON social media communications will not be tolerated, and the offending person will be immediately removed from the session and potentially referred to the appropriate authorities -see the 'Behaviour section' below for more information.
- All abusive or inappropriate messages and images will be removed from BICON social media platforms.
- All organising committee members will monitor their own BICON social media platforms and remove any abusive and inappropriate messages and images. All of these incidents will be reported to the BICON safeguarding representatives.
- Any complaints or allegations made on BICON related social media, against any persons or organisations, related to BICON or not, shall be treated with the utmost urgency and responded to within 24 hours. Any complaints or allegations made should be passed onto the BICON safeguarding representatives within 24 hours.

During the BICON conference (6th and 7th of September)

- At the beginning of each session at the conference, information on appropriate behaviour will be shared along with whom to contact if there are concerns.
- Participants will be advised that they must not take photographs of the sessions or if online, taking screenshots on their laptop or smartphones. Any relevant presentations or worksheets will be provided in digital format at the beginning of each BICON session.
- Adults, other than those who have a designated support role, will not communicate with children and young people directly.
- Anyone who wishes to engage with a young person / child (such as a care leaver) must request this via the steering committee - they can do this by emailing the dedicated safeguarding email address above.
- BICON will ensure that every "Breakout room/sessions" contains at least ONE allocated safeguarding representative who will monitor the sessions to ensure compliance with the BICON code of conduct and report (to the BICON safeguarding representatives) any issues or breaches of the code of conduct, or anything else related to safeguarding that needs to be followed-up.
- For online participants - while BICON believes that being able to see one another helps our sessions feel more interactive and personal, we respect that some participants may wish to turn their video feed off-during the conference, or parts of it. They can turn off the video at any time.
- All BICON online sessions will be recorded for use as reference in the case of an incident or dispute, but also for marketing and training purposes.
- More information on the BICON data management is available in our Privacy Policy and more information on recording can be found in the 'Recording & Data Management' section below.

Behaviour

BICON's commitment to protecting children and young people in our conference includes protecting these young participants from others who may seek to engage in abusive or inappropriate behaviour.



We are well aware that online platforms which offer video and audio functionality are open to many varieties of abuse, and BICON is clear that we have a **zero tolerance policy to abusive or inappropriate behaviour**. The following activities are considered abusive or inappropriate and will result in immediate exclusion from the conference (in-person or online) with immediate effect:

- Making inappropriate comments
- Making abusive or inappropriate comments
- Posting abusive or inappropriate messages in public chat
- Using abusive, insulting, or offensive language
- Taking photographs without permission
- Being drunk and disorderly
- Sending abusive or inappropriate messages via live chat
- Sharing inappropriate images via chat or as a virtual background
- Attempting to address or contact children and young people outside of the conference

Recording & Data Management

The BICON conference event sessions will be hosted on the Changemakers for Children platform, which integrates with Zoom virtual meeting platform. All the online webinars and workshop sessions will be recorded on the cloud, and be made available for future examination.

You can find more information about how Changemakers for Children handles personal data by reading the platform's [Data Policy](#).

Reporting an incident

BICON wants all participants to feel that they are in a safe, comfortable, and professional environment when taking part in any of our preparation meetings, events, during the online conference and in BICON related / hosted social media communication.

If any conference participant or persons engaged in social media communications feels unsafe, uncomfortable or wishes to raise a complaint, they should feel free to contact us directly at using BICON safeguarding email safeguarding@bicon.asia.

The BICON safeguarding representatives will respond to all messages within one working day and, if necessary, involve the relevant authorities or related organisations as soon as possible.

The BICON safeguarding representatives will record, refer, monitor and report on ALL incidents and ensure that the agencies receiving the complaint are following their procedures as set-out in the Safeguarding policy.

Further information

For further information on how we are protecting children and young people before, during or after the BICON conference, and to report any concerns or incidents, please contact: safeguarding@bicon.asia

Last updated: 31/08/2023