



Ministry of Security and Justice

This document was developed
by the Dutch ministry of Security
and Justice in cooperation with
several partners



[REPORTCHILDSEXTOURISM.EU](https://reportchildsextourism.eu)

**Protect children,
screen your employees**

Protect children within your organisation

Children have rights: any place, anywhere, any time

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets the standard for children's rights and for their protection against harm. The Convention requires that the best interests of the child are the underpinning principle in all actions concerning children (Article 3). One important right is the right of children to be free from any kind of abuse, including sexual abuse. According to the Convention, child abuse can be physical, emotional and sexual and it also includes neglect, exploitation and harassment.

Unfortunately, some adults are interested in abusing children. They often seek out places where they can gain easy access to children, such as children's homes, schools, orphanages, youth centres, shelters, sport clubs and similar projects. They apply for a paid job or offer their support as volunteers. We call upon every organisation associated with the care of children to do their utmost to create a safe and secure environment for the children in their care. You can read how to do this below.

There are several ways of ensuring safety before you recruit a volunteer or a paid employee in your organisation. They include:

- Conduct as many background checks of new volunteers or paid employees as possible, e.g. the certificate of conduct
- Ask for documentation to confirm identity and proof of relevant qualifications of the staff
- Ask for as many as three references, including some from previous posts or from others who have knowledge of the candidate's experience and suitability to work with children
- Include some specific questions in the job interview, intended to ascertain an applicant's attitudes and values in relation to the protection of children
- Consider the use of probationary periods of employment to ensure an applicant's suitability once in a post.

There are also several requirements for staff working with children. The children have to be treated with respect regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, disability or other status. In addition, staff must be visible

and never work alone with the children as far as possible, so that there is always an element of supervision.

Staff must be expressly prohibited from having a sexual relationship with someone in their care under the age of 18 years and from paying for any sexual services with anyone under the age of 18 years old.

Talk to children about their contact with staff or other people and encourage them to raise any concerns.

Certificate of conduct policy: the criminal records

If the applicant is from the Netherlands we strongly recommend that you ask for a certificate of conduct (VOG). This certificate is issued by Justis, part of the Dutch government. In this document the Dutch State Secretary for Security and Justice declares that the applicant has not committed any criminal offences that have a bearing on the performance of his or her duties. That means that if a person from the Netherlands has relevant criminal offences in the Netherlands that include the sexual abuse of children, the certificate will not be granted.

**If this is the case,
the organisation knows that
they must NOT hire this person.**

How to apply for a certificate of conduct (VOG)

Applicants have to start the application procedure for a VOG themselves: the organisation cannot do it for them. The organisation has to sign the applicant's application form, because the Dutch volunteer or employee is going to work for this organisation and so the certificate is needed to be able to work for this organisation. The applicant can download the form from: <http://www.justis.nl/producten/vog/certificate-of-conduct/>. The applicant then takes the form to the municipality where he or she is living in the Netherlands or the applicant authorises someone to do it for him or her.

If the applicant is going to work for an NGO in the Netherlands that has eRecognition, the certificate can be applied for electronically. In such cases, it is advisable to contact the NGO establishment in the Netherlands for additional information on this subject. Justis will decide on the application within four to eight weeks after receipt. If an application is urgent, it is strongly recommended to seek contact with Justis by telephone: +31 088 988 22 00.

If the applicant has committed any relevant criminal offences, a VOG will not be issued. In that case, this person must not be hired.

If the applicant is not familiar with the procedure of applying, further information is available on the website <http://www.justis.nl/producten/vog/certificate-of-conduct/index.aspx> or phone: +31 088 988 22 00.

What does a certificate of conduct cost?

The fee for processing the application is about €30,- to be paid by the applicant when submitting the application form. This covers the costs incurred by the municipal authorities and Justis. The costs involved in applying for a VOG may never be an excuse for the volunteer or the organisation to refrain from applying or demanding a certificate. Children's protection has priority.

What to do if abuse is discovered?

The police must always be informed if sexual child abuse is discovered or suspected in an institute/organisation. If the suspect is Dutch or is of a different European nationality, it can also be reported to the authorities of this person's country via www.reportchildsextourism.eu.

Never ignore child abuse, report it!

