



ISPCAN Code of Conduct

updated October 2026

Purpose

The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) is committed to creating events, activities, workplaces, partnerships, and professional interactions where **everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful, welcoming, and safe environment.**

ISPCAN values diversity and expects all individuals working for, with, or participating in ISPCAN activities to demonstrate high standards of professional and personal ethics, integrity, respect, and accountability. The existing ISPCAN policy applies to members and anyone conducting business with ISPCAN, attending ISPCAN events, or interacting with ISPCAN staff or members, whether online or in person.

By registering for, accepting an invitation to, working with, or participating in an ISPCAN event or activity, individuals acknowledge that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it.

Applicability

This Code applies to all individuals involved in ISPCAN activities, including:

- attendees and delegates;
- speakers and presenters;
- volunteers;
- ISPCAN staff;
- Board and committee members;
- ISPCAN members;
- organizers;
- partners;
- exhibitors and sponsors;
- contractors and suppliers;
- and others participating or conducting business with ISPCAN in any capacity.

It applies to:

- Congresses and conferences;
- Regional Rise Up Policy Forums and Huddles;
- webinars and virtual events;
- working group and committee meetings;
- receptions, social events, and networking activities;
- exhibitions and side events;
- events organized in partnership with or sponsored by ISPCAN;
- ISPCAN-supported research groups or professional activities;
- and other in-person, virtual, or hybrid activities organized, hosted, supported, or conducted under the ISPCAN name.



This Code applies during the activity itself and to related communications and interactions, including email, social media, online platforms, and other digital communications.

Standards of Conduct

Respect, dignity, and fairness

All participants are expected to treat others with dignity, courtesy, and respect and to contribute to an environment that is professional, inclusive, and free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, intimidation, and inappropriate conduct.

Participants must respect differences including, but not limited to:

- age;
- disability;
- education;
- ethnicity;
- gender;
- gender identity or expression;
- language;
- marital or family status;
- national origin;
- political beliefs;
- professional background or role;
- race;
- religion;
- sexual orientation;
- socio-economic status;
- culture;
- career stage;
- and other personal characteristics.

Participants should respect the knowledge, insight, experience, and expertise of colleagues, partners, members of the public, and other participants, regardless of role, seniority, or length of ISPCAN membership.

Participants should also:

- engage in professional and constructive dialogue, including when opinions differ;
- respect personal boundaries, privacy, and safety;
- follow reasonable instructions from ISPCAN staff, organizers, venue personnel, and security personnel;
- behave in a manner that supports a safe and welcoming environment;
- avoid conduct that may cause harm, humiliation, intimidation, or secondary trauma.



Integrity and honesty

Individuals participating in ISPCAN activities are expected to act honestly and accurately in representing:

- professional affiliations;
- qualifications;
- knowledge and skills;
- education and training;
- professional experience;
- research findings;
- conclusions and opinions.

Individuals should recognize the limits of their knowledge and expertise and correct any material misrepresentation of their qualifications or competencies.

ISPCAN membership, position, authority, or association must not be used to imply a level of competency that does not exist, assert inappropriate power over others, or obtain preferential treatment.

Responsibility and accountability

Individuals must not:

- make statements on behalf of ISPCAN unless authorized to do so;
- publicly represent themselves as speaking for ISPCAN without authorization;
- commit ISPCAN to any agreement, obligation, or action unless authorized;
- act in a manner contrary to ISPCAN's mission, policies, bylaws, or applicable law.

Individuals are expected to protect the interests and reputation of ISPCAN and act consistently with its mission and responsible business practice.

Prohibited Conduct

Bullying

Bullying is prohibited.

Bullying includes behavior that may reasonably be characterized as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, humiliating, denigrating, or as an abuse or misuse of power.

It does not need to be intentional to constitute bullying.

Bullying may arise from:

- position or status;
- physical strength;
- personality or authority;
- collective or group pressure;
- professional influence or seniority.



Such conduct may cause embarrassment, distress, fear, or humiliation to an individual or group.

Harassment

Harassment in any form is prohibited.

Harassment includes unwelcome or inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, physical, written, visual, or electronic behavior that has the effect, or could reasonably be expected to have the effect, of:

- violating another person's dignity;
- offending or humiliating another person;
- intimidating or threatening another person;
- creating a hostile, degrading, offensive, or unsafe environment.

Harassment does not need to be deliberate. A single serious incident may constitute harassment, while other conduct may become harassment when repeated or sustained.

Examples include:

- offensive, derogatory, discriminatory, or stereotyped comments or jokes;
- bullying, intimidation, threats, or unwanted attention;
- insulting or abusive gestures;
- unwelcome physical contact;
- unnecessary invasion of personal space;
- repeated unwanted communication or contact;
- offensive remarks regarding appearance;
- offensive songs, jokes, messages, images, or materials;
- deliberate disruption of presentations or discussions;
- inappropriate copying of emails for the purpose of intimidating or exerting pressure;
- use of social media to insult, bully, demean, or damage another person;
- and other conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or unsafe environment.

The existing ISPCAN policy explicitly extends these standards to electronic communications, email, websites, blogs, and social media.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited at all ISPCAN events and activities.

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that could reasonably be expected or perceived to cause offense, humiliation, intimidation, discomfort, or fear.

It may be verbal, nonverbal, physical, written, visual, or electronic and may occur between people of the same or different genders.

Examples include:

- unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, or advances;
- unwanted sexual attention;



- requests or pressure for sexual activity;
- unwelcome touching or physical contact;
- sexual images, messages, or materials;
- sexual innuendo;
- repeated unwanted invitations or communications of a sexual nature;
- coercive sexual behavior;
- and other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Safeguarding

Participants must respect individual and collective rights to privacy and maintain confidentiality in accordance with applicable law and ISPCAN policies.

Because ISPCAN's work concerns children and other potentially vulnerable individuals, particular care must be taken to:

- protect children's safety;
- use language and activities that do not inflict harm;
- avoid causing secondary trauma;
- safeguard information relating to children or adults who disclose or report abuse;
- avoid exposing individuals, families, or communities to further risk through inappropriate disclosure of information.

ISPCAN staff, Board members, partners, and members are expected to comply with ISPCAN safeguarding, diversity and inclusion, and related policies. Contracts and memoranda of understanding should include compliance with relevant ISPCAN safeguarding and Code of Conduct requirements.

Avoidance of Personal Gain and Bribery

Individuals must not:

- offer or accept bribes or improper inducements;
- misuse ISPCAN membership or position for personal or special-interest advantage;
- use positions of authority to make unfair demands;
- use their relationship with ISPCAN to mistreat or exert inappropriate influence over others.

Conflict of Interest

Individuals should disclose any professional, personal, financial, academic, or other competing interests that may be relevant to their role within ISPCAN or to an ISPCAN-supported activity.

Activities undertaken in ISPCAN's name must remain consistent with ISPCAN's mission, strategic objectives, and policies.

Where a conflict of interest arises, the individual should promptly inform the ISPCAN CEO and, where appropriate, the Chair of the ISPCAN Board.



Collegiality and Collaboration

ISPCAN supports collaboration with professional societies, partners, institutions, governments, civil society, and other organizations to promote knowledge exchange, learning, and good practice.

Individuals should not deliberately obstruct appropriate collaboration or behave in ways that may bring ISPCAN into disrepute through such partnerships.

Reporting Concerns or Misconduct

Participants who experience, witness, or otherwise become aware of conduct that may violate this Code are encouraged to report their concerns **as soon as reasonably possible**.

Reports may be made to:

- the ISPCAN event organizers;
- an ISPCAN staff member;
- the ISPCAN Executive Director / CEO;
- a member of the ISPCAN Board;
- or another designated ISPCAN representative.

The existing policy identifies the Executive Director as a formal reporting contact and provides the address execdirector@ispcan.org.

Where a concern involves an ISPCAN staff member, organizer, Board member, or another person who may create a conflict of interest, the individual making the report may request that the matter be directed to an appropriate alternate or independent representative.

If an incident may constitute a crime, abuse, maltreatment, or another matter requiring mandatory reporting, ISPCAN may report the matter to the relevant local or national authorities in accordance with applicable law.

Where local procedures are unclear, local organizing partners or relevant ISPCAN representatives may be consulted to ensure appropriate reporting and safeguarding.

Participants may also contact appropriate local authorities directly where conduct may violate applicable law.

Participants must not knowingly make false or misleading allegations.

Response to Reports and Non-Compliance

ISPCAN will take concerns seriously and respond according to the circumstances and applicable policies and procedures.

Possible immediate or interim actions may include:

- asking an individual to stop inappropriate behavior;
- providing support or resources to the person raising a concern;
- restricting access to an ISPCAN activity;
- suspending participation pending review;
- removing an individual from an event or activity;



- referring the matter to local authorities or another appropriate organization;
- or taking other reasonable measures to protect participants.

Under the existing ISPCAN policy, when an allegation is formally reported to the Executive Director or a Board member, the Board Chair may convene a committee of at least three Board members together with the CEO to review the matter. A confidential record is maintained, and the review may result in measures including suspension, termination of membership, exclusion from future events, or another proportionate sanction.

Where appropriate, findings and final outcomes will be communicated to relevant individuals involved.

Confidentiality and Privacy of Reports

ISPCAN will make reasonable efforts to handle reports and related information sensitively and confidentially.

Confidentiality may be limited where disclosure is necessary to:

- address an immediate safety concern;
- comply with legal or safeguarding obligations;
- report suspected criminal conduct;
- conduct an appropriate review;
- or take appropriate corrective action.

Information will be shared only as reasonably necessary to address the concern.

Prohibition of Retaliation

ISPCAN prohibits retaliation against any person who, in good faith:

- raises a concern;
- reports suspected misconduct;
- participates in an investigation or review;
- provides information;
- or assists in addressing a suspected violation.

Threats, intimidation, harassment, exclusion, professional pressure, or any other form of retaliation are not tolerated.

Participant Responsibility

Every individual has a role in creating a safe, respectful, ethical, and inclusive ISPCAN community.

Participants are encouraged to speak up when they experience or witness inappropriate conduct and to seek assistance when needed.

Participation in an ISPCAN event or activity is a privilege and may be subject to reasonable conditions necessary to protect the safety, dignity, and well-being of participants.

By registering for, electronically accepting, signing, or participating in an ISPCAN event or activity, participants acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with



this Code of Conduct. The existing ISPCAN policy likewise states that electronic agreement or signature constitutes confirmation that the individual has read, understood, and agreed to abide by the policy.

ISPCAN expects every participant to help create an environment where **people can learn, connect, collaborate, and engage safely and respectfully.**

