



# COVID-19 GUIDANCE

## Children's inclusion and protection

The Covid-19 pandemic puts stress on all of us. Children face their own unique challenges: their school life has been interrupted, and they must now stay at home and continue their learning from there. Everyday social interactions with peers which support a child's development have stopped.

It is important for church and community leaders, partners and Tearfund staff to involve children in decision-making processes. This will give children the opportunity to contribute towards their community, and will boost their confidence.

We should also be aware of how we communicate with children about the pandemic, and care for them appropriately during this time.

The aim of this document is to provide clear information and guidance on ensuring the participation and protection of children during the pandemic, including situations where physical distancing measures and lockdowns are in place.

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### Key questions

- How do we include children in our community and church responses to Covid-19?
- How do we ensure the protection of children during this time?
- How do we appropriately communicate and engage with children?
- How do we collect data in our programming to identify any gaps there may be in reaching the most marginalised and vulnerable children?
- How can we help communities and churches adapt their practices to ensure child protection and participation at this current time?

## How do we respond?



### Be aware of basic child protection principles:

- Promote the best interests of the child.
- Child survival and positive development are paramount.
- Do not discriminate.
- Promote children's participation.



### Set goals that ensure the following:

- Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play.
- Children have access to information such as public health messages and about key services.
- Service delivery is sensitive to the different needs of girls and boys.
- Risks are identified and responded to (eg mental health, abuse).
- Children's protection systems are strengthened.



### Adapt inclusively and positively:

- Ensure families with children have access to health and hygiene resources.
- Take into account the particular needs of children with physical disabilities and underlying health issues.
- Include children in virtual church meetings and Bible studies.
- Ensure there are opportunities for feedback (positive and negative) about challenges that children face.



### Communicate new measures inclusively:

- Use child-friendly messaging that explains what different measures and adjustments mean, using information from trusted sources (eg the World Health Organization)
- Ensure that parents and caregivers understand these measures too.
- Ensure that information can be understood by different people with different needs

## Useful resources

The Asia Foundation: [COVIBOOK](#) (children's book about Covid-19 by Manuela Molina)

GBV Guidelines: [Covid-19: How to include marginalised and vulnerable people](#)

UNHCR: ['Child protection'](#)

UNICEF: [Child rights and security handbook](#)

UN: [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Irish Government Department of Education and Skills: [Coronavirus / Covid-19 resources](#) (including child-friendly posters)

Unicef: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) information hub](#)