

COMMON  
APPROACHES

# SAFE SCHOOLS

ALL CHILDREN  
LEARN AND ARE  
PROTECTED BY 2030

Many children are not safe in and around school. Children's safety is threatened by violence, natural and everyday hazards and conflict that affect their learning and wellbeing.

- **Violence against children by peers, teachers and other school staff.** Nearly 720 million school aged children live in countries where Physical and Humiliating Punishment at school is not fully prohibited.
- **Natural hazards affect children, teachers, educational staff and schools.** Since 2000, almost 35,000 children died in schools due to disasters, which are increasing rapidly due to climate change.
- **Conflict and attacks on education.** Around 500 attacks on schools were documented in South Sudan, DRC and Yemen in 2017.
- **'Everyday hazards'** can include road accidents, drowning in monsoon season, health epidemics and many more.

Safe Schools is uniquely developed to ensure that all children of school-going age are safe and protected from all hazards and threats in and around school.



## HOW DO WE HELP KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?

Safe Schools is an all inclusive, all hazards approach to keep children safe in and around schools. Empowering children to stay safe, with a focus on girls, is critical.

The four components of Safe Schools are:

1. Authorities develop and strengthen **policies and systems** for school safety and protection
2. **School safety management** protects children in and around school
3. **School facilities** create a safe and enabling school environment
4. Teachers and children demonstrate self-protection **knowledge, skills and behaviours** for the safety and protection of children in and around school

Between 2013-2017,  
**29 countries**  
experienced  
military use of  
schools

## KEY PRINCIPLES

-  Do no harm
-  Address all hazards
-  Act collectively
-  Empower and engage children
-  Link policy and practice
-  Challenge harmful social & gender norms

These cross-cutting principles and components should always be addressed in Safe Schools.

# AN APPROACH BUILT ON EVIDENCE

The Safe Schools Common Approach draws from decades of experience, learning and research from across the globe - developed from evidence in and beyond Save the Children. It brings together three proven interventions that address challenges facing children in and around schools:

1. **Comprehensive School Safety** – assesses and reduces hazards and risks through safer school facilities, school safety management, risk reduction and building resilience.
2. **Schools as Zones of Peace** – supports children facing disruption to education due to conflict, including attacks on schools, forced recruitment and sexual violence
3. **Violence Free Schools** – supports teachers and students to prevent and respond to physical, psychological or sexual violence

The result is one single approach, bringing together our best understanding and practices of how to address all hazards to keep children safe in and around schools. A strong learning and research agenda will ensure the continuous improvement of Safe Schools and allow us to measure the impact.



## SAFE SCHOOLS IS UNIQUE

Save the Children will support the global movement to protect children from violence, natural and everyday hazards and conflict in and around schools and ensure continual and equitable access to education.

The Safe Schools Common Approach has been developed across the Child Protection and Education Global Themes, and with a range of Member and Country Offices.

The approach can be implemented flexibly and expanded gradually, depending on the context and available resources.

## PROTECTING CHILDREN IN ALL CONTEXTS

Safe Schools is adaptable. It can operate in humanitarian response programming in conflict or disaster prone contexts.

And it can also be integrated into development contexts, where there is still a lot of work needed to protect children in schools in peaceful contexts.

It is necessary to collaborate with existing programmes where possible.



## SAFE SCHOOLS ADVOCACY

Safe Schools works with a range of different partners to protect children in and around schools. Government authorities are key partners for delivery and achieving sustainable results at scale.

Depending on the context, advocacy efforts could include: any of the following Seeking Government endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration to support schools during times of conflict. Advocating to hold perpetrators of violence to account. Campaigning to end Physical and Humiliating Punishment in schools, Championing national commitment to implement Comprehensive School Safety.

Safe Schools is a strong focus of Save the Children's Stop the War on Children campaign, which aims to help keep school children safe from the impact of conflict.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

A commitment to reaching the most marginalised and vulnerable children is at the heart of Safe Schools.

**Gender:** Addressing harmful gender norms, promoting positive social and gender norm change and ensuring schools protect children against gender-based violence.

**Disabilities:** Addressing that children with disabilities are at a greater risk of violence and need safe, specialised learning facilities.

**Resilience:** Strengthening the resilience of children, teachers, families and communities to prepare for and respond to shocks that affect schools such as conflict and disasters. And ensuring children develop coping skills.

**Child safeguarding:** Uncovering and addressing sensitive safety risks for children in schools, with full responsibility and accountability, following safeguarding guidelines.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Detailed guidance is available to help country offices design the scope and focus of their Safe Schools work.

Guidance in Action Packs includes:

1. Getting Started – *how to begin implementing Safe Schools*
2. Policies and Systems – *bringing together advocacy and programmes and building partnerships*
3. School Level Safety Management – *preparing for change, identifying and reducing risks and building sustainability*
4. School Facilities Safety
5. Safety Knowledge and Skills - *for children, teachers, families and communities*
6. Evaluation and Measurement

## KEY CONTACTS

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