



# Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy

Soul Food works directly with and on issues involving children and young adults. This work is guided by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (1989).

## Definitions

*Children or kids*, usually referred to as minors and/or *unaccompanied minors*, to denote their status as *migrant children*, (see below) are defined as those *young people* under the age of 18.

The term *young adults* refers to those between the ages of 18- 23.

Other terms that are used by Soul Food to refer to all who fit in both categories include: *youth, young people, young migrants, and migrant youth*.<sup>1</sup> All these young people are considered as *young Soul Food members*.

According to the [United Nations](#), a *migrant* is “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.”

The term *unaccompanied minor* refers to migrants under the age of 18, who have been separated from their parents and/or legal guardians, and are therefore “unaccompanied.” The majority of Soul Food’s young members fall under this scope either currently (minors) or previously (young adults). A small percentage of young Soul Food members are also asylum seekers and refugees (see definitions below).

*Asylum seekers* are individuals who are seeking international protection. According to the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (2006) and the [International Organization for Migration](#) (2020), “in countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.”

A *refugee*, as defined by the [1951 Refugee Convention](#), is someone who is outside of his/her country of nationality because of a substantiated fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership of a particular social group or political opinion. An officially recognized refugee was once an asylum-seeker whose asylum claim has been granted.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeunes (young people), jeunes migrants (young migrants), mineurs isolés étrangers (isolated foreign minors), mineurs non-accompagnés (unaccompanied minors), and jeunes majeurs (young adults) are the French terms used by Soul Food.



The term *local youth* refers to minors and young adults who are from where our activities are taking place. These are typically *French teenagers*.

#### **Resources:**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/migration/index.html>

[https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-](https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/UNHCR_Refugee_or_Migrant_EN.pdf)

[content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/UNHCR Refugee or Migrant EN.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/UNHCR_Refugee_or_Migrant_EN.pdf)

<https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html>

<https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>

### **Action and protection**

#### **Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The four main pillars of the CRC are at the forefront of every Soul Food action taken. These are rights that every child is entitled to and they include:

1. A child's right to survival, development and protection
2. Dedication to the best interests of the child
3. A child's right to equality and non-discrimination
4. Respect for the views of the child (participation)

When it comes to upholding these rights, Soul Food does not differentiate between children and young adults (as defined above) except in the case of if a distinction must be made to protect the rights of a child, over those of a young adult. Otherwise, Soul Food also upholds these basic rights as important pillars to working with all Soul Food members, including young adults.

### **Internal safeguarding**

It is mandatory for all Soul Food staff, senior young members and volunteers to read and sign the Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy. Soul Food will immediately suspend any staff member, intern, volunteer, board member, consultant, or advisor who is accused of violating this policy, pending the outcome of the investigation. Soul Food reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any of the above who have been proven guilty in an investigation, which may include reporting the incident to the police.

#### **Communication and Media Guidelines**

This section outlines the principles Soul Food employs when communicating externally about our work and the work of our members. It contains general principles for ensuring our young members (both children and young adults) are kept safe at all times, as well as specific guidelines which must be followed by Soul Food staff and volunteers, as well as photographers, film crews and journalists visiting Soul Food events and activities. These



guidelines should also be followed by journalists who contact young Soul Food members for articles or interviews.

All Soul Food communications about our young members will respect the following principles:

**Dignity:** The young member's dignity will be upheld at all times. Language used in posts, articles, etc. will not degrade, insult or shame young members. All young members should always be dressed appropriately in photos and should never be depicted in any poses that could be interpreted as sexually provocative.

**Accuracy:** The portrayal of young Soul Food members must not be manipulated or sensationalized in any way. Images and stories should provide a balanced depiction of the young person's life and circumstances, balancing negatives with empowering images or showing the progress that children are making. Communications should avoid making generalisations, which do not accurately reflect the nature of the situation and pictures should not be taken and used out of context.

**Privacy:** Any information that could be used to identify a young member, or put them at risk cannot be used. Exceptions will be made for young adults, who have explicitly consented.

Otherwise, Soul Food ensures the following;

- In images, children's faces will never be shown.
- Anonymity – First names and preferably, made up names, will be used when writing about young members. Soul Food will never share details about where they live, their school or other information that would giveaway where they regularly spend time.
- Personal information about our young members, including information stored on computers, will be kept in secure files. Access to these should be limited to those who need to use them during the course of their work for Soul Food.

### **Interviewing Young Soul Food Members**

Interviewing children and vulnerable young people requires specific skills. Certain basic principles should be followed to ensure their dignity and their rights are respected throughout the process, as well as after the material is published. Soul Food expects the following principles to be followed when journalists and others interview young Soul Food members:

- **Informed consent:** In relation to interviews, informed consent includes explaining which topics will probably be covered in the interview and clarifying the young person's right to withdraw their consent at any point. The interviewer should review the young person's understanding of consent before beginning the interview, and take the interviewee's life experiences and language capabilities into consideration. Most of Soul Food's young members are not familiar with journalism and do not read/speak/write French or English fluently, and these factors should be taken into account when asking for informed consent. Whenever language comprehension is not met, a translator should be used in the language understood by the young Soul Food member.
- **Provision of support:** When interviewing minors, there should be someone else present during the interview, who the minor is familiar with. Whenever possible, the



minor should be given a choice regarding who supports him/her during the interview.

- **Respect the right to say no:** Interviewers should always be clear before starting the interview that the young person only has to talk if s/he are comfortable doing so, and s/he can stop and withdraw his/her consent at any point.
- **Respecting the right to information:** If you are going to take notes, or record the interview in another way, you must explain this to the young person and verbally ask his/her permission to do so.
- **Sensitivity:** Many young Soul Food members have experienced trauma. This must be taken into consideration when interviews are conducted. Information and questions that have the potential to act as psychological triggers, should be discussed with Soul Food staff before they are discussed with young members.

### **Visits by Non-Soul Food Members**

Special care must be taken when organizing visits for partners and external photographers, filming crews, journalists or other visitors within the scope of Soul Food projects, cultural excursions, artistic activities, and publications. These include the following:

- All non-Soul Food members must be briefed on Soul Food's Child and Youth Protection Policy before they meet young Soul Food members, who will be interviewed, photographed or filmed. They must sign their commitment to adhere to this policy.
- Ensure that photographers and filmmakers are not allowed to spend time with or have access to minors without supervision.
- In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of all young members, Soul Food must be notified as to how the photographer or film maker intends to use the images or stories. Soul Food reserves the right to refuse use if it is felt that, in doing so we are not acting in accordance with our Child and Youth Protection Policy and our media and communication principles. Copies of publications, images, or films should be sent to Soul Food to be passed on to the young Soul Food members involved.
- Any Soul Food images, taken by Soul Food staff or volunteers and used by another organization, must be credited to Soul Food/Photographer's Name ©. If any Soul Food publications are quoted or used by another organization or non-Soul Food member, Soul Food and the Author's Name must be credited and cited.

### **Accountability: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Child and Youth Protection Policy**

Soul Food will regularly monitor the implementation of its Child and Youth Protection Policy. Progress, performance and lessons learned will be reported and included in Soul Food's annual reports.

This policy will be periodically reviewed internally. This will be done by:

- researching the most recent international child safety and protection policies and UN recommendations;
- interviewing young Soul Food members to ensure they feel safe and comfortable during Soul Food excursions and activities;



- reviewing previous Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy reports;
- making any necessary updates to the most recent Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy.



## Statement of Commitment to the Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in the Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing and promoting them within my work with Soul Food.

I further understand that if I am completing any type of joint project with a young Soul Food member or the organization as a whole (not including an interview for an article, requiring only one short interview and/or photo session), it will involve me undergoing a check for criminal convictions related to working with children, signing a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including those considered 'expunged' or 'spent,' and declaring any investigations or allegations made against me with respect to child protection issues.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/role: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/publication: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_