



## **Risk Assessment and Crisis Management Policy**

Date: 13 November 2023

Review date: 18 November 2025

### Policy

EIL/AFS recognises that our activities expose us to risk and have the potential to impact or harm our staff, participants, volunteers, stakeholders, host families, local coordinators, group leaders, and the success of the organisation. It is our policy to adopt best practice in the identification, analysis, evaluation, control, monitoring and review of risks to ensure that they are avoided, reduced, shared or accepted. EIL/AFS's risk assessment policy is supported by EIL/AFS's child protection policy.

### Responsibility

The Board is responsible for managing risk with the Senior Leadership Team maintaining oversight of programme/academic/participant related risk – this involves the identification of risks and maintenance of an organisational risk register. Programme-related risk is identified and considered at the programme design stage by the programme team. Risks are categorised as high, medium, and low and rated in terms of their likely impact. Risk will be a standing item within the Operations Report to be presented at each board meeting. It is the Board of Directors and the Senior Leadership Team's responsibility to identify risk and develop strategies to mitigate identified risks or to delegate responsibility for the task. A copy of the register is available at each meeting of the Board and the relevant sections

available at staff programme meetings. The risk register and acceptable risk thresholds are approved by the Board.

### Principles

- Embed full and effective consideration of risk within the planning and management of new and existing activities across the organisation
- Engage with all relevant stakeholders to determine and identify risks
- Determine the level of risk for our organisation by considering the likelihood and impact of identified risks
- Measure risk using a low, medium, and high rating system on the risk register
- Manage risk and maintain the risk register to best inform decision making throughout the organisation

### Assessment

EIL commits to implementing a three factor approach towards crisis management risk assessment:

- Immersion
- Assessment
- Response

### **IMMERSION:**

EIL/AFS believes that the primary methods of minimising risk, as well as maximising the benefits of the intercultural learning experience is full immersion in the host community and host culture. This involves working with local staff and understanding the local culture to provide a high degree of engagement with host families, community projects, schools and local communities. To achieve this EIL/AFS:

- Only sends participants to countries where there is a local EIL/AFS office or other selected partners with personnel on the ground who are experienced in supporting international participants.
- Only place under-18 participants in communities and projects in Ireland where there is a local garda vetted co-ordinator, host family, mentor and/or group leader.
- Child safeguarding training is available for staff or volunteers working with children.

- Design programmes that maximise cultural integration and interchange with local people.
- Require international partner organisations to have 24 hours x 7 days emergency contact and support systems in place to deal with any emergencies and crises.
- Has an emergency phone in place to ensure a member of the EIL/AFS staff can be contacted at all times.
- Require international partner organisations to provide on-arrival orientations or briefings that address safety issues.
- Provide arrival orientations in Ireland for all inbound participants that address safety issues.
- Conduct pre-departure orientation activities to support and encourage participants to research as much as possible about the destination and culture they will be immersed in.
- Promote respect as a tool for a successful and safe integration into host communities.

These commitments apply equally to programmes in Ireland or in other countries. The fundamental idea underpinning this process of integration is that people are safest in their own communities where they have solid connections. The premise behind integration is to foster these connections so that participants are placed in a position close enough to their host families, local coordinators and broader communities to ensure a safe and satisfying experience.

## **ASSESSMENT**

EIL/AFS has a risk register for identifying, assessing and mitigating potential risks to participants, staff, volunteers, partners, and the EIL/AFS organisation. Identification and assessment of risk is a collaborative process involving stakeholders and independent experts where there is a gap in knowledge in the organisation. Mitigation involves taking preventative measures to ensure that both the likelihood and impact of incidents is kept to a minimum and that individuals and organisations involved are equipped to deal with them.

A seven-step process for risk assessment will be put in place:

1. Identify risks and hazards through consultation with stakeholders

2. Evaluate risk without mitigation
3. Assess the impact of the risks pre mitigation
4. Consider steps to mitigate the risk
5. Evaluate risk post mitigation
6. Assess the impact of the risk post mitigation
7. Maintain a periodic review process to ensure mitigation steps are in place

## **RESPONSE / CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

EIL/AFS recognises that crises and problems out of their control occur. In order to coordinate responses to crises EIL has a 24 hour emergency contact number as well as an emergency response team.

### 24-Hour Emergency Contact

An emergency phone is in place to ensure a member of the EIL/AFS staff can be contacted at all times. The staff member on call is empowered to alert any staff members, including Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for child safeguarding issues, local coordinators , mentors and international partners as circumstances require.

### Emergency Response Team

An Emergency Response Team (ERT) responds to any problem or crisis, which involves a risk to the safety of any person, associated with EIL/AFS, either a participant or other individual(s).

The ERT consists of at least 3 of the people below:

- CEO
- Senior Manager
- Department manager relevant to the issue at hand
- DLP (where there is a concern for child safety)

The ERT is activated when the Programme Manager (or in their absence the most senior staff member available in that department) dealing with a problematic situation or a potentially problematic situation makes the assessment that there is a risk to safety or feels

the need for assistance in addressing a crisis. The functioning of the ERT is determined by the nature of the emergency at hand. These specific emergencies are split into a series of primary categories:

- Health Emergencies
  - General
  - Outbreak of infectious diseases
  - Serious mental health emergencies
- Legal Emergencies
  - Crime committed against programme participant
  - Abuse of a child or vulnerable adult
  - Sexual assaults
  - Crimes committed by programme participant
- Missing Programme Participant
- Political Emergencies and Natural Disasters
- Death of a programme participant
- Death of a programme participant's loved one

These categories of emergency are applicable to all programme areas in EIL/AFS, and ERTs should be sufficiently flexible to deal with the nuances and unique difficulties faced by the relevant departments.