





CMIS GLOBAL VOICES MUN 2026

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

Agenda:

Ensuring Digital Safety and Protecting the Online Rights of Children and Youth

STUDENT DELEGATE HANDBOOK

PROTECT • INFORM • EMPOWER • INCLUDE

This student handbook converts the UNICEF Study Guide into a practical revision and preparation resource for delegates. It follows the terminology, themes and questions presented in the provided CMIS UNICEF material.

- Read the mandate and agenda first.
- Understand the major online risks faced by children and youth.
- Connect each issue with children's rights, safety, privacy, access and participation.
- Prepare your country position before entering committee.
- Develop realistic, child-centred and implementable proposals.
- Use the final checklists and note pages for your own country research.

1. Committee at a Glance

Item	Delegate Reference
Committee	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Agenda	Ensuring Digital Safety and Protecting the Online Rights of Children and Youth
Core focus	Online safety, child rights, privacy, digital access, digital literacy and protection
Key approach	Child-centred, safe, inclusive and rights-based digital environment

2. UNICEF Mandate

The provided study guide states that UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946 to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries devastated by World War II. Its mandate was later extended to the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries, and in 1953 it became a permanent part of the UN system while retaining the acronym UNICEF.

- Protect children from online abuse, exploitation and cyberbullying.
- Promote privacy and digital rights.
- Support safe and inclusive access to technology.
- Strengthen digital literacy and online safety education.
- Encourage international cooperation and child-friendly digital policies.

3. What Is Cyber Safety?

Cyber safety refers to protecting children and young people from online risks, abuse, exploitation, harassment, privacy violations and harmful digital content, while ensuring that they can safely enjoy the benefits of technology.

4. Key Issues on the Agenda

Issue	What Delegates Should Understand
Cyberbullying	Repeated harassment, threats, humiliation or social exclusion through digital platforms.
Digital child labour	Online work such as influencer activity or participation in esports can raise concerns about economic exploitation.
Privacy and data protection	Children's personal information, photographs, location and online behaviour may be collected or misused.
Harmful and manipulative content	Children may encounter hate speech, violent material, misinformation or content promoting self-harm.
AI and deepfakes	AI can create manipulated images, impersonation and other forms of abuse involving children.
Digital inequality	Children without reliable internet, devices or digital education may be excluded from opportunities available to others.

The study guide identifies stronger policies, education, responsible technology design and child-centred protection systems as important responses to these challenges.

5. History

- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. Our mandate was clear: to help children and young people whose lives and futures were at risk – no matter what role their country had played in the war.
- What mattered to UNICEF was reaching every child in need, protecting children's rights to survive, thrive and reach their potential.
- This is the DNA of UNICEF. From the ashes of war to the global challenges that affect millions today, our mandate has never wavered. UNICEF works to protect the rights of all children. Whoever they are. Wherever they live.
- The story of UNICEF is a story of how much good the human family can do when it unites to protect the rights of its youngest and most vulnerable.
- UNICEF's official updated name is the United Nations Children's Fund.

UNICEF works to protect children's online rights and digital safety by building on its broader global framework for children's rights established through milestones like the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Foundational Framework (1989): The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted, serving as the core global treaty for children's well-being and protection, though it predated the modern consumer internet.

Research and Advocacy (1988–2010s): The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy, began spearheading global studies on emerging challenges, publishing foundational frameworks like *Child Safety Online: Global challenges and strategies* to tackle cyberbullying, exploitation, and digital risks.

Digital Environment Focus (2013–2021): Following a 2013 Day of General Discussion on Children and Digital Media, a dedicated working group collaborated to draft formal guidelines. This work culminated in **General Comment No. 25 (2021)** on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, providing official UN guidance on balancing online protection with digital access.

6. Current Scenario and Emerging Risks

- **High Digital Exposure:** Globally, 82% of young people aged 15 to 24 used the internet in 2025. In India, a 2024 UNICEF U-Report survey found that 40% of young people spend over four hours online daily.
- **The "4Cs" Classification:** UNICEF classifies online risks into four broad categories: **content** (harmful or age-inappropriate material), **contact** (interaction with malicious actors), **conduct** (cyberbullying or peer harassment), and **contract** (terms of service and data privacy violations).
- **Gaps in Educational Infrastructure:** According to the ASER 2024 survey cited by UNICEF, 89.1% of adolescents aged 14–16 have a smartphone at home, but 76% primarily use them for social media, while only 57% use them for learning. Furthermore, digital literacy gaps persist—65.2% of boys know how to change passwords or block profiles compared to 58.7% of girls.

7. Key Strategies and Partnerships

- UNICEF partnered with organizations like the LEGO Group to co-develop tools such as the Child Online Safety Assessment, helping companies design policies that protect children from harm while preserving their access to the benefits of the internet.
- UNICEF collaborates with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support annual global campaigns like **Safer Internet Day** every February.

8. Digital Footprint

A digital footprint is the unique trail of data and information that you leave behind when you use the internet or digital devices.

Types of Digital Footprints

- **Active Digital Footprint:** Data you share on purpose. Examples include posting on social media, filling out online forms, or sending emails.
- **Passive Digital Footprint:** Data collected without your direct knowledge or action. Examples include website cookies, your IP address, and location tracking from apps.

Common Examples

- Social media photos, likes, and comments
- Search engine history and website visits
- Online shopping and purchase history
- Subscriptions, newsletters, and account signups

Why It Matters

Your online trail builds a wider digital reputation that can be seen by employers, schools, and companies. A large or careless footprint can also increase risks for privacy loss, profiling, and identity theft.

9. Cybercrime and Common Online Threats

Cybercrime is criminal activity that either targets or uses a computer, a computer network or a networked device. Most cybercrime is committed by cybercriminals or hackers who want to make money. However, occasionally cybercrime aims to damage computers or networks for reasons other than profit. These could be political or personal.

Cybercrime can be carried out by individuals or organizations. Some cybercriminals are organized, use advanced techniques and are highly technically skilled. Others are novice hackers.

Threat	Meaning
Phishing	Fake messages or websites designed to steal personal information or passwords.
Identity theft	Using someone's personal information without permission.
Online scams	Tricking children into sharing money, passwords or personal details.
Hacking	Gaining unauthorised access to an account or device.
Cyberbullying	Using digital platforms to threaten, embarrass or repeatedly harass someone.
Online grooming	An adult building trust with a child online for harmful or exploitative purposes.
Unauthorised sharing	Sharing private information or images without permission.

Key Cyber Crime Policies and Laws

- **Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act):** The primary legal framework for electronic governance and cyber offenses in India, penalizing hacking, data tampering, and identity theft.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023:** Works alongside the IT Act to penalize digital forgery, organized online crime, and digital extortion.
- **National Cyber Security Policy:** A strategic framework by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) aimed at protecting cyberspace, building security workforces, and preventing cyber crime.
- **CERT-In Directives:** Mandatory cybersecurity guidelines under Section 70B of the IT Act requiring organizations to report cyber incidents within six hours of detection.

10. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. Examples include:

- spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos or videos of someone on social media
- sending hurtful, abusive or threatening messages, images or videos via messaging platforms
- impersonating someone and sending mean messages to others on their behalf or through fake accounts

- engaging in sexual harassment or bullying using generative AI tools.

What are the effects of cyberbullying?

When bullying happens online it can feel as if you're being attacked everywhere, even inside your own home. It can seem like there's no escape. The effects can last a long time and affect a person in many ways:

- **Mentally** – feeling upset, embarrassed, stupid, even afraid or angry
- **Emotionally** – feeling ashamed or losing interest in the things you love
- **Physically** – tired (loss of sleep), or experiencing symptoms like stomach aches and headaches

10. AI, Emerging Technology and Child Protection

The study guide highlights that AI is becoming part of children's everyday digital lives through smart devices, games, chatbots, learning applications and recommendation systems. It also identifies risks including manipulated images, impersonation, technology-facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse, peer-to-peer violence, cyberbullying, hate and discrimination.

- Delegates should consider child safety when discussing AI and other emerging technologies.
- Responsible technology design should be part of prevention.
- Policies should address both opportunities and risks of technology.
- Children's rights and safety should remain central when considering innovation.

11. Keeping Children Safe Online

- Establish clear family and school ground rules for technology use.
- Use available privacy and technology-protection settings.
- Balance online activities with offline recreation and an active lifestyle.
- Think before posting, especially when upset or angry.
- Remember that once content is shared, control over it can be difficult to regain.
- Respect other people's privacy and do not access their accounts or devices without permission.
- Check privacy settings and control who can see personal information and location.
- Do not share sensitive personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, bank details or passwords.

- Be cautious before accepting unknown friend requests and consider whether the profile is genuine.

12. What Is UNICEF Doing to Help?

The provided study guide describes UNICEF as working with governments, technology companies, parents, caregivers, educators, communities and children to make the digital environment safer.

- Advocating for necessary regulation and child-friendly digital policies.
- Engaging with technology companies to promote responsible business conduct.
- Supporting coordinated national responses to technology-facilitated and online sexual abuse through the WeProtect Model National Response framework.
- Supporting government investment and community-led initiatives for online safety education.
- Strengthening digital literacy among parents, caregivers and professionals.
- Analysing emerging trends in AI and other technologies to provide policy guidance.
- Using multi-country research projects such as Global Kids Online and Disrupting Harm.

• UNICEF Initiatives and Policy Focus

- **Policy Briefs and Regulations:** UNICEF released a policy brief titled *Keeping Children Safe Online: Trends in Online Platform Regulation and Emerging Lessons*, examining frameworks across six jurisdictions (including India, Australia, the EU, Kazakhstan, South Africa, and the UK).
- **Emerging Business Obligations:** UNICEF emphasizes eight mandatory business obligations for digital platforms: safety/privacy by design, risk/impact assessments, age assurance, proactive detection of illegal content, notice-and-action mechanisms, mandatory reporting, complaints procedures, and transparency reporting.
- **Child Protection in Education:** UNICEF promotes "Safety by Design" principles for EdTech, calling for minimum safety and data privacy standards before platforms are introduced in schools. It also supports global frameworks like the We Protect Model National Response to combat online sexual exploitation and abuse.

13. Child Rights and Responsible Technology

The study guide emphasizes that governments, parents and caregivers, educators, civil society, children and young people, and businesses all have roles in shaping a safe and positive digital environment. Digital businesses are particularly important because their products and services can directly affect children's rights.

- Businesses should consider child-rights impacts within human-rights due diligence.
- Technology design should take account of children's safety, privacy and well-being.
- Children and young people should be able to participate in discussions about digital policies affecting them.

14. General Comment No. 25 (2021)

General Comment No. 25 (2021) concerns children's rights in relation to the digital environment. The provided study guide presents it as an important UN framework for balancing online protection with digital access.

- The digital environment creates opportunities for children as well as risks to their rights.
- Children's rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled in the digital environment.
- Digital policy should consider privacy, safety, access to information and other child rights.
- Meaningful and safe digital access is part of the wider child-rights discussion.

15. Delegate Preparation: Questions to Answer

- What is my country's current approach to child online safety?
- What laws, policies or programmes does my country have concerning children and digital technologies?
- What are the major online risks affecting children in my country?
- How does my country approach privacy and children's personal data?
- What is my country's position on digital access and the digital divide?
- How should governments respond to cyberbullying and online exploitation?
- What safeguards should apply to AI and deepfake technologies involving children?
- What role should technology companies play?
- What role should schools, parents and caregivers play?
- What international cooperation does my country support?

- Which proposals could my country realistically support or fund?

16. Possible Policy / Resolution Areas

- Digital literacy and online safety education in schools.
- Child-friendly reporting and complaint mechanisms.
- Stronger privacy and data-protection safeguards for children.
- International cooperation against online child exploitation and cybercrime.
- Responsible technology design and child-safety-by-design approaches.
- Awareness programmes for parents, caregivers and educators.
- Support for children affected by cyberbullying.
- Measures to reduce the digital divide and improve safe access to technology.
- Research and monitoring of AI, deepfakes and emerging digital risks.
- Child participation in developing digital policies that affect them.
- Capacity-building and information-sharing between countries.

17. Delegate Quick Checklist

- ☐ I know the UNICEF mandate and agenda.
- ☐ I can explain cyber safety in my own words.
- ☐ I know at least six major issues on the agenda.
- ☐ I understand digital footprints and privacy risks.
- ☐ I can explain cyberbullying and common cybercrime examples.
- ☐ I have researched my country's position.
- ☐ I know my country's possible allies and areas of disagreement.
- ☐ I have prepared realistic solutions.
- ☐ I can explain how my proposals protect children's rights.
- ☐ I am ready to negotiate and work with other delegates.

18. What Should Countries Focus On?

Delegates can discuss:

- Stronger child-data privacy protections.
- Digital literacy and cyber-safety education.
- Better reporting and support systems for cyberbullying.
- International cooperation against cybercrime and online exploitation.
- Child-safety measures for AI and emerging technologies.

- Greater access to safe and affordable digital technology.
- Awareness programmes for parents, teachers and caregivers.
- Responsible practices by technology companies.
- Meaningful participation of children and young people in digital-policy discussions.

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