



**WAR CHILD GLOBAL  
SAFEGUARDING POLICY  
FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH  
AND ADULTS**

## POLICY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Purpose & objectives

War Child (WC) is committed to be a safe organization at all times and all contexts. WC work engages children, youth<sup>1</sup> and adults<sup>2</sup>, often those who are particularly at risk of experiencing harm and abuse. As such, the Global Safeguarding Policy and procedures underpin all of WC's work and ensures that all children, youth and adults who we interact with or work for our organisation are protected from harm and abuse.

Through this policy WC aims to increase **awareness, prevention, reporting and responding** on safeguarding issues, by taking immediate actions when/if policy and code of conduct breaches take place.

### Description & Scope

This policy applies to every War Child Representative. War Child has a duty of care and responsibility to keep all individuals<sup>3</sup> safe who come into direct or indirect contact with. All cases reported will be carefully investigated in line with our Investigation Key Principles and Standard Operating Procedures. WC implements a zero-tolerance approach to substantiated safeguarding concerns.

### References & other policies relation

Global Code of Conduct  
Global PSEAH Policy  
Global AFAC Policy  
SpeakUp! Procedure

## POLICY DETAILS

### This policy applies to

Every War Child Representative

### Responsible team/department

War Child Alliance / Integrity and Safeguarding Department

### This policy is essential for

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC)  
The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action  
Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)  
Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Global Standards  
Donor Requirements

### Review Frequency

Bi-annually from the commencement date

### Version #

1.3 (2004/2018/2023)

### Commencement date

1st of January 2024

## APPROVAL SIGNATURES

	<b>Policy owner:</b>	<b>CEO:</b>
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Signature</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Romee Pameijer Head of Integrity & Safeguarding	Rob Williams WC Alliance CEO

\*In principle: Chair of Policy Committee (Director Shared Operations). In case of high-risk policies: Chief Executive Officer

<sup>1</sup> Youth are defined as persons between the age of 15 to 24 years old as defined by the United Nations.

<sup>2</sup> Adults are defined as any individual over the age of 18.

<sup>3</sup> This includes all children, youth and adults who are, or are not, part of WC's programmes activities that a WC representative encounters in both their professional and personal life.

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Mission Statement</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Scope</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Approach</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What Behaviours are prohibited by the Safeguarding policy?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What War Child expects from you</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Safeguarding Standards War Child Should Meet</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>11</b>

## MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that no child should be part of war. We are driven by a single goal - ensuring a safe future for every child living through war.

## POLICY STATEMENT

War Child (WC) works to uphold the fundamental rights of children<sup>4</sup> - and we are committed to keeping them safe from harm, neglect, exploitation, and abuse. Our work engages children, youth<sup>5</sup> and adults<sup>6</sup>, often those who are particularly at risk of experiencing harm and abuse. Our Global Safeguarding Policy and procedures underpin all of our work and ensures that all children, youth and adults who we interact with or work for our organisation are protected from harm and abuse. This policy applies for every War Child Representative both during, after and in between work hours.

Harm and abuse towards children, youth and adults may come from inherent power imbalance between the individual and the organisation (and its representatives). War Child is aware that for generations societies have experienced inequalities and people have different access to resources and power. Power dynamics can lead to harm, abuse and exploitation by those in a position of power and/or authority. We can address this by incorporating an inclusive approach in our safeguarding work.

War Child's organisational culture is critical in preventing harm and abuse from occurring, as well as building and maintaining an open, transparent and equitable culture where all representatives feel safe to speak out about unacceptable behaviour. War Child is committed to building and maintaining an open, transparent and equitable culture, as we believe this is critical to preventing harm and abuse.

This policy and all the Integrity Framework Policies are fully compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), Interagency Standing Committee (IASC), Keeping Children Safe standards (KCS)<sup>7</sup>. All action taken to protect children will be in accordance with the best interests of the child as defined by Article 3 of the UNCRC.

War Child's safeguarding policy is committed to and guided by the following ethical commitments:

- War Child has a duty of care and responsibility to keep all individuals<sup>8</sup> safe who come into direct or indirect contact with.
- War Child employees and representatives have a duty of care to report any incident or concern that is witnessed, suspected or overheard.
- War Child implements a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding. Suspected breaches of this policy are responded to within defined timeframes, following the standard operating procedures (SoP) , and resulting in take appropriate disciplinary action where/as needed.

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<sup>4</sup> A child is defined as any individual under the age of 18.

<sup>5</sup> Youth are defined as persons between the age of 15 to 24 years old as defined by the United Nations.

<sup>6</sup> Adults are defined as any individual over the age of 18.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk>

<sup>8</sup> This includes all children, youth and adults who are, or are not, part of WC's programmes activities that a WC representative encounters in both their professional and personal life.

## WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

This Global Safeguarding Policy applies equally to everyone associated with War Child, including but not limited to:

- All permanent and temporary employees
- Volunteers and interns
- Consultants
- Ambassadors and their assistants/employees
- Invited visitors (including donors/funders; media/journalists)
- Members of Supervisory Board (WCH)
- Board of Trustees (WCUK)
- Partner organisations (i.e., local NGOs, Ministry of Education) where deemed necessary and appropriate
- Accompanying family members of international employees
- Third-party contractors (i.e., suppliers, builders, contractors etc.) where deemed necessary and appropriate
- Members of research bodies, academic institutions and associates where deemed necessary and appropriate.

The term '**War Child representatives**' will be used to refer to all people from the list above and associated with War Child.

## OUR APPROACH

Safeguarding at War Child is a set of organisational policies, procedures and practices employed to ensure War Child is a safe organisation, responsible for protecting individuals from any form of misconduct, harm or abuse, including but not limited to sexual misconduct, caused by those who have a duty to protect and care for them.

War Child is committed to take all measures possible to preventing any form of abuse, neglect, harm or misconduct including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of children, youth and adults, caused by any War Child representative, including through the following means:

- **Awareness:** Ensuring that all War Child representatives are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them to protect children, youth, and adults from any form of abuse and exploitation in their private and working lives.
- **Prevention:** Ensuring, through awareness and good practice, that staff and those who work with War Child, minimise the risks of any form of abuse and exploitation, including but by no means limited to conducting relevant vetting and background checks of staff as part of their recruitment process according to appropriate Human Resource (HR) procedures.
- **Reporting:** Ensuring that all staff and those who work with War Child are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding allegations of abuse or exploitation in line with the SpeakUp policy.
- **Responding:** Ensuring that for any reported breach/issue/concern immediate action within 24 hours is taken in line with our detailed Standard Operating Procedures. Essential principles of case management such as the survivor centered approach apply for any issue addressed ensuring the safety and well-being of the child, youth, or adult involved.

## WHAT BEHAVIOURS ARE PROHIBITED BY THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

Child Rights, Human Rights, Integrity and Justice are central to all War Child activities - including our duty to uphold the safety and dignity of the children and War Child representatives who take part in our programmes. As such the safeguarding policy implements a list of prohibited behaviours/conduct for every War Child representative when engaging with children, youth and adults. These behaviours/unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to:

**Abuse:** Abuse is any act which individuals, institutions or processes do - or fail to do - which directly or indirectly results in a negative impact on another. Refer to forced child labour, trafficking, emotional abuse, exploitation, modern slavery, financial/material abuse, grooming, neglect, online abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, and traditional harmful practices for specific definitions.

**Bullying:** Repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.

**Emotional abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts negatively on an individual's emotional state. This can include restriction of movement, degrading treatment, humiliation, bullying (including cyber bullying), threats, discrimination, ridicule or other non-physical forms of hostile or exclusionary treatment.

**Exploitation:** This encompasses, but is not limited to, the following forms of exploitation:

- *Commercial exploitation* of an individual occurs when that person works or does activities for the benefit of others but does not benefit in any way or experiences harm as a result of the work. This includes, but is not limited to, domestic work, forced participation in armed conflict, including the use of child soldiers, and involvement in harmful and hazardous work.
- *Sexual exploitation* is a form of exploitation and sexual abuse that involves an individual being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation or any other material needs (e.g., prostitution, trafficking and the exploitation of and creation and dissemination of sexually explicit videos and pictures). This can also occur online where an act of a sexually exploitative nature is carried out against an individual. It includes any use of information and communication technology that results in sexual exploitation or results in or causes images/other material documenting the exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed or transmitted.

**Financial/material abuse:** Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, corruption or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Forced labour:** Any work that is undertaken by an individual involuntarily under the threat of punishment. It deprives individuals of their dignity and is harmful to their physical and mental well-being.

**Grooming:** Behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure an individual for sexual activity. It happens when there is a power differential or well-planned manipulation in a relationship, which the abuser exploits for their own satisfaction. This is a common tactic used by perpetrators against children for sexual activity. However, adults can also be groomed. This can occur during face-to-face or online contact.

**Harassment:** Unwanted conduct, including threats and demands, which offends, intimidates or humiliates someone. It can be a one-off or repeated act.

**Harm:** Any detrimental effect on an individual's physical, psychosocial, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse, exploitation, harassment, bullying, assault, or any action that puts the person at risk, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

**Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs or provide adequate care and support for them. This includes the failure to protect children, youth and adults from harm as well as provide adequate nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions.

**Online abuse:** Any form of abuse that happens whilst interacting with digital technology. It can happen anywhere, for example social media, text messages and messaging apps, email, online chats, online gaming, and live-streaming sites. Examples of online abuse include cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, sexual abuse, psychological/emotional abuse and sexual exploitation.

**Physical abuse:** Actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. This may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or other physical acts.

**Sexual abuse:** An actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a child (defined as anyone under 18) is sexual abuse, regardless of local age of consent. Mistaken belief that a child is over the age of 18 is not an acceptable defence.

**Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another. Sexual harassment is particularly serious when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment may be unintentional and may occur outside the workplace and/or outside working hours. While typically involving a pattern of behaviour, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between or amongst persons of the opposite or same sex.

**Spiritual abuse:** Using cultural norms and practices or text from spiritual books or quoting scripture as an excuse to perpetrate abuse and violence on children, youth and adults or instilling fear into them.

**Traditional Harmful Practices:** Practices based on cultural and religious beliefs and values that have harmful consequences for children, youth and adults e.g., witchcraft, early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation.

**Trafficking:** Any involvement in the recruitment, transportation or receipt of an individual for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threat, force or other forms of coercion.

## WHAT WAR CHILD EXPECTS FROM YOU

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we expect every War Child representative to help build a safe and inclusive culture. You have a duty to uphold the principles laid out in this policy 24/7 (both during, after or in-between working hours).

- It is your obligation to report all actual or suspected safeguarding concerns through War Child's reporting channels.
- You will not retaliate against those who are involved, or you suspect are involved, in safeguarding cases.
- You will abide by the SpeakUp! Procedure comprising the Whistle-blower Protection Policy.
- War Child is committed to investigating all safeguarding concerns that are reported in line with our investigation procedures. You are obliged to participate in safeguarding investigations, in line with the Code of Conduct and the HR handbook.
- You will promote a culture of equity where all people are treated with respect, dignity and without preference. You will be mindful of your own position of power as a WC representative, in relation to programme participants and others we work with.
- In everything you do, you act in the best interest of the child in order to prevent harm and abuse.
- You will promote a child participatory approach, where children are at the center, they have a voice and agency, actively contributing to any engagement that involves them and their wellbeing.
- At any time during all kind of engagements with children project participants, WC must strictly apply the four eye principle, where at least two WC representatives are present at all times.
- At all times, you abide by the principle of non-discrimination and guidelines laid out in the Code of Conduct.
- As a War Child representative, you empower those we work with and for, engaging them in a way that they fully understand their right to safety when engaging with any representative or activity associated with the organisation.
- This policy is part of the Integrity Framework and works together with all other policies. As such, you will abide by and be aware of all policies and procedures in the Integrity Framework, including the:
  - Code of Conduct (CoC)
  - Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption (AFAC) Policy
  - Protection from Sexual Abuse, Exploitation And Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
  - Retaliation Policy
  - Speak Up Procedures
- These policies should be signed by all staff every 2 years and can be found on the WC Alliance website.



## **SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS WAR CHILD MUST MEET**

This policy contains ten interlinked and mutually reinforcing standards which aim to ensure that War Child is a safe organisation. No standard can be considered in isolation, and each standard must be given equal weight and importance across the organisation.

These are global safeguarding standards tailored to War Child's mission, vision, and programming. War Child is committed to implementing and living up to these standards in all of our work. It is the responsibility of all War Child representatives to work to uphold these standards in their work. Detailed implementation guidance can be found [here](#):

### **A. Standard 1 - Governance, Accountability & Risk Management:**

War Child has a commitment to put in place robust safeguarding measures to ensure the safety and protection of children, youth and adults and all who come into contact with War Child programmes. We take full responsibility for all our actions. War Child commits to actively mainstreaming this policy across the organisation to ensure adherence to international safeguarding standards. Where necessary, War Child will support the adaptation of the policy to ensure adherence to relevant national laws and cultural context.

### **B. Standard 2 - Leadership & Organisational Culture:**

All War Child leadership and management teams will prioritise safeguarding within the organisation and take steps to build an organisation where employees feel safe to challenge issues of power and bias as well as promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Employees will be encouraged to access safe spaces within the organisation to enable dialogue, engagement and action to build and maintain a safe work environment. Leadership teams will take accountability and proactively reflect and act to ensure their behaviours and actions promote a transparent, safe and inclusive culture.

### **C. Standard 3 - Awareness-raising & Building Knowledge:**

War Child will actively promote its Global Safeguarding Policy in ways that are accessible, informative and easy to understand for all representatives. This will be achieved through dedicated inductions and training as well as organisational communications on War Child's safeguarding approach and ensuring individuals are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. All employees and representatives receive safeguarding mandatory training within 1 month of joining, or prior to direct engagement with any programme participant or community member where War Child implements activities. Refresher training will be held at least bi-annually.

### **D. Standard 4 - Human Resources:**

Safeguarding measures will be embedded into all human resource activity. We will recruit employees and volunteers who share War Child's values and are committed to safeguarding. We will ensure that all employees, volunteers, contractors, visitors, consultants, third party vendors, and others undertaking work on behalf of the organisation understand their safeguarding responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their obligations.

### **E. Standard 5 - Safe Programming & Research:**

Safeguarding is built into all proposals, project design, budgets, and implementation including research and advocacy programmes. Safe programming promotes equality, equity, reduces risk and increases protection.

#### **F. Standard 6 - Partners, Contractors & Suppliers:**

War Child recognises that organisations approach safeguarding differently and abide by various standards. Significant partners, contractors, and/or suppliers who deliver work in partnership with, or on behalf of, War Child, will undergo due diligence processes that assess their Safeguarding Policy, procedures and ability to implement effective safeguarding measures. See detailed guidance on partnership due diligence.

#### **G. Standard 7 - Working with Children, Youth, Adults & Communities:**

War Child works with children, youth and adults who are often at heightened risk of experiencing harm and abuse due to social status, displacement or conflict. We commit to ensuring our interactions are safe and recognise unequal power dynamics that may be at play. War Child also commits to ensuring safe, inclusive and participatory involvement of children, youth, adults and communities in its programmes, research and advocacy work. All staff will abide by the Code of Conduct at all times.

#### **H. Standard 8 - Reporting & Response:**

War Child will ensure that it has robust reporting and response processes in place that are accessible to all children, youth, adults, employees and volunteers and are adapted to the local context. War Child ensures that all safeguarding concerns are responded to efficiently and are recorded on a global tracking log. War Child's reporting and response systems are designed to safeguard the best interests of the children, youth, and adults we work with.

#### **I. Standard 9 - Media, Communications & Advocacy:**

War Child will deliver quality communications, campaigns, media and advocacy work in a way that minimises the risk of harm to children, youth and adults and prioritises their wellbeing and safety. Our priority is to ensure that any individual engaging with War Child's media, communications and advocacy activities is a meaningful and informed process. Any content that is collected will prioritise the dignity and respect of individuals and ensure rigorous vetting procedures are followed prior to public dissemination. Informed consent will always be collected. Safer communications should meet the standards laid out in the communications SOPs, which lays out requirements for informed consent, safety, dignity, best interests of the child.

#### **J. Standard 10 - Data Privacy & Digital Safeguarding:**

Safeguarding is embedded into all of War Child's data collection and management processes. We adopt the Do No Harm principle and compliance with data protection laws ensuring that any data collected about, or from, children, youth and adults is used in ways that respect their privacy and minimise the risk of harm. War Child will do our utmost to ensure all our digital applications, platforms and services are safe, secure and do not result in inappropriate or unethical capture and/or use of data on children, youth and adults. Further guidance can be found in the Data Protection and Information Sharing Protocols DISP.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All WC representatives have the responsibility to uphold, encourage, implement, promote the standards and principles laid out in this policy proportionally to their function. The following lays out additional expectations for specific job roles, including but not limited to the following:

- **All War Child Representatives:** Everyone who works on behalf of War Child is required to report any suspicions or incidences of safeguarding concerns. Failure to report to a suspicion of a safeguarding concern relating to someone else is a breach of War Child's policy, and could lead to disciplinary procedures. There is no obligation for an individual to report any incident that has happened to them.
- **Trustees and Directors:** War Child Directors and Trustees hold overall accountability for this policy and its implementation.
- **War Child Affiliate's CEO:** Each War Child Affiliate's CEO is responsible for the application of this policy within their own affiliate.
- **Safeguarding Focal Points (SFFP):** Provide support to prevent and respond to Safeguarding concerns alongside their substantive roles, in line with the SGFP TOR ([hyperlink](#)) Raising awareness and promoting best practices by receiving concerns, supporting survivors and reporting concerns in a confidential manner.
- **Safe Guarding (SF)Leads/Advisors:** Provide support to Focal Points, staff and programmes to prevent and respond to Safeguarding Raising awareness, conducting training and promoting best practices, as well as receiving concerns, conducting referrals to specialized services and supporting investigations. SG Leads/SG Teams/Advisors and senior management should offer further support to help implement this policy.
- **Managers (Senior/Middle-Management):** Should lead by example setting the highest standards. Responsible for promoting awareness of this policy with people they manage and for supporting/developing systems that create and maintain a safe working environment. This also includes the responsibility for ensuring that all staff and Related Personnel receive regular Safeguarding trainings, with a particular emphasis on staff who are in direct contact with the people we serve. Managers should prioritize Safeguarding awareness raising for themselves and their divisions, individual departments or teams, and provide budget lines for some activities. Managers ensure that self-audit Safeguarding tool that informs the upholding of the 10 standards above, is completed frequently.
- **Programme Teams:** Consult with communities with whom we work (in a safe, accessible, and culturally appropriate way), to ensure that community members and those working on behalf of War Child are familiar with War Child's Code of Conduct, how to raise complaints and concerns, and that War Child will take action when this happens. Programme Teams should also clearly explain what goods and/or services the community members are entitled to and how they are selected.

## REPORTING

All War Child representatives are **obligated** under this policy, as well as all the policies under the Integrity Framework, to report all concerns, suspicions and potential breaches **as soon as possible within 24 hours** to:

- Safeguarding Focal Point in WC country offices
- The Regional/Global Safeguarding Advisors

Or use **War Child Alliance's** safe, confidential and/or anonymous Reporting Channels<sup>9</sup>:

- [SpeakUp@warchild.net](mailto:SpeakUp@warchild.net)
- <https://www.warchild.net/integrity/>

Failure to report can place any WC representative in a position of breaching the policies and the obligation to report, which may lead to disciplinary measures and may be defined as gross misconduct.

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<sup>9</sup> Reporting mechanisms will be cohesive across all War Child countries and programmes after the merger is completed. Until then, please use the reporting mechanisms associated with your Affiliate.