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HO 1.5: Example Safeguarding Policy

Adapted from Bond. [Safeguarding Policy](#). 2018.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect people—particularly children, at-risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance—from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with *[insert non-governmental organization (NGO)]*. This includes harm arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with *[NGO]*
- The design and implementation of *[NGO]*'s programs and activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by *[NGO]* and informs staff and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

This policy does not cover:

- Sexual harassment in the workplace; this is dealt with under *[NGO]*'s Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy¹
- Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by *[NGO]* or associated personnel

What is safeguarding?

We understand “safeguarding” to mean protecting people—including children and at-risk adults—from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs.

Scope

- All staff contracted by *[NGO]*
- Associated personnel while engaged with work or visits related to *[NGO]*—including but not limited to:
 - Consultants
 - Volunteers
 - Contractors
 - Program visitors—such as journalists, celebrities and politicians

Policy statement

[NGO] believes that everyone we come into contact with—regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin—has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. *[NGO]* will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by staff or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding [as appropriate]: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies and procedures associated with them.

¹ Some NGOs now include workplace bullying and harassment in their safeguarding portfolio, as it relates to harm caused by coming into contact with our staff or programs. However, accompanying procedures for dealing with workplace bullying and harassment are likely to be different, due to legal and statutory differences in handling workplace incidents.

[NGO] commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

[NGO] responsibilities

[NGO] will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programs and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with [NGO]. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programs is gathered and communicated.
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associated personnel.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.

Staff responsibilities

Child safeguarding

[NGO] staff and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under 18 years of age.
- Sexually abuse or exploit children.
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect.
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children—including child labor or trafficking.

Adult safeguarding

[NGO] staff and associated personnel must not:

- Sexually abuse or exploit at-risk adults.
- Subject an at-risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

[NGO] staff and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance since they would be based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

Additionally, [NGO] staff and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of this Safeguarding Policy.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an [NGO] staff member or associated personnel to the appropriate staff member.

Enabling reports

[NGO] will ensure that safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities with whom we work.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by [NGO]'s Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

[NGO] will also accept complaints from external sources—such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

How to report a safeguarding concern

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Focal Point [as appropriate] or line manager. If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point or line manager (for example, if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously or if that person is implicated in the concern), they may report to any other appropriate staff member. For example, this could be a senior manager or a member of the human resources (HR) team.

[Provide contact details]

Response

[NGO] will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure and legal and statutory obligations. *(See procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in associated policies.)*

[NGO] will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff found in breach of policy.

[NGO] will offer support to survivors of harm caused by staff or associated personnel, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need-to-know basis only and kept secure at all times.

Associated policies

- Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns
- Procedures for safeguarding in staff recruitment
- Other policies as appropriate

Glossary of terms

Program participant

Someone who directly receives goods or services from [NGO]'s program. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child

Every human being below 18 years of age, irrespective of when the local law considers people as adults.

Harm

Psychological, physical or any other infringement of an individual's rights.

Psychological harm

Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment—such as bad-name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement or isolation.

Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

Actions to protect vulnerable people against sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers.

Safeguarding

The responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff and work do not harm children and adults who are at risk and do not expose them to abuse or exploitation.

Sexual abuse

When a person forces another person, or people, to do anything sexual that they do not freely agree to, by force or through threats.

Sexual exploitation

Abusing a person's vulnerability, unequal power or trust for sexual purposes. This can include profiting in any way from another person being sexually exploited.

Survivor

A person who has been harmed, sexually exploited or abused. The term "survivor" emphasizes strength, resilience and survival. The term "victim" emphasizes that the person must be protected and needs justice.