



Wounded Healers International
Restore Dignity, End Sexual Violence

WOUNDED HEALERS INTERNATIONAL **CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

Wounded Healers is dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding around sexual violence prevention, manifestation, and the survivor's support by targeting and empowering both girls and boys to create a culture of mutual respect. Our Mission is to innovate systems, programs, technical expertise, empowerment, and sustainable structures that improve the girl's safety, education, and Leadership.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that:

- All who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident, and well supported in understanding and meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from violence and to engage positively with children and young people in ways that enhance the achievement of our purpose.
- We have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behavior of our staff, volunteers, board members, sponsors, donors, partners, visitors, other associates, or us as an organization that results in violence against a child or young person and/or places them at risk of the same.
- Children and young people we work with are aware of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviors of our staff, volunteers, board members, sponsors, donors, partners, visitors, and other associates, as well as the routes for reporting such incidents.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to practice in a way that protects them.

We recognize that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs, or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.



We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to, and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy, and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practices through our policies, procedures, and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training, and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures, and behavior codes confidently and competently
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording, storing, and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work, and one-to-one discussions
- Make sure that children, young people, and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involve children, young people, parents, families, and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people, and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.



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DEFINITIONS

Associate” refers to a range of contracted paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support Wounded Healers International. It includes, among others, board members, volunteers, interns, sponsors, researchers, donors, consultants and contractors, staff, visitors, and partners.

“Child” in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the purposes of this policy, is defined as any person — girl, boy, young woman, young man, and children of other gender identities — under 18 years old (see UNCRC Article 1 — definition of young person/people or youth).

“Director” is an executive director of wounded Healers International. The people who are the target of and who we know will be immediately affected by one or more project outputs, irrespective of whether these are delivered directly by Wounded Healers International or by partners or organizations who are acting on behalf of Wounded Healers International.

“Harm” is any detrimental effect on a child’s or young person’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

Staff” refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work at Wounded Healers International.

Violence” against a child or young person includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation of a child or young person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example, the web, social media, or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a child or young person. Violence consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions, or organizations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child or young person’s wellbeing, dignity, survival, and development.



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“*Visitor*” refers to a range of persons who are visiting our offices or programs and may come into contact with children and young people through a Wounded Healers International entity, including journalists, media, researchers, visiting sponsors and celebrities.

“*Young person/people*” or “*Youth*” in line with United Nations definitions, includes individuals — young women, young men, and young persons of other gender identities — 18 to 24 years old. This group spans the categories of children, adolescents, and adults, but regards young people as having particular safeguarding needs and requiring distinct consideration aside from younger children and older adults.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

1. **All staff, board members, volunteers, sponsors, donors, partners, visitors, and other associates shall:**
 - a. Commit and contribute to an environment where children and young people feel respected, supported, safe, and protected.
 - b. Never act or behave in a manner that results in violence against a child or young person, or places a child or young person at risk of violence.
 - c. Be aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy.
2. **All staff and volunteers shall:**
 - Agree, by signing, to comply with this policy, including the Safeguarding Code of Conduct
 - Undergo criminal background checks as a condition of employment or volunteering.Report and respond to safeguarding concerns and breaches of the policy in line with Wounded Healers International Whistleblower Policy and Code of Ethics and Conduct.
3. **Sponsors, donors, visitors, partners, and other associates shall:**
 - a. Agree to comply with the Safeguarding Code of Conduct or: Comply with his/her own Code of Ethics and Conduct, provided the contracting manager ensures that it complies and is consistent with this policy; and
 - b. Sign off on this Safeguarding Policy and undergo criminal background checks before visiting Wounded Healers International program areas and/or sponsored children.



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4. **All Wounded Healers International managers shall ensure that:**
 - a. Children, young people, and communities with which we engage work, or are in contact are made aware of the provisions of this policy to ensure they have the confidence and ability to report any incidents occurring against children and young people.
 - b. Staff, associates, and visitors are aware of the Safeguarding Implementation Standards that are applicable to their role or engagement with us.
 - c. They support and develop systems that maintain an environment that is safe for and prevents violence against children and young people.
 - d. They are accountable for ensuring that the policy is fully embedded within their areas of responsibility in accordance with the Safeguarding Implementation Standards.
5. **Senior Director of Donor Engagement & Loyalty; Technical Advisor, Youth & Economic Empowerment Practice; and Senior Director, Human Resources, shall ensure that:**
 - a. Wounded Healers International has in place procedures that are consistent with this policy and with the global document Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Issues, which outlines the reporting requirements and the manner in which they are escalated. These procedures will be reviewed every three (3) years. The policy and applicable procedures will be made available in child-friendly formats.
 - b. Wounded Healers International implements our Safeguarding Implementation Standards as they apply to our context, the people (staff, associates, and visitors), children, and young people with whom we engage, as well as the processes, programs, projects, events, and activities we undertake.
6. Organizations that work with us in carrying out our programs, projects, processes, events, and/or activities involving children and young people must comply with the Safeguarding Guidelines.
7. Wounded Healers International shall monitor compliance with this policy through the mandatory tracking and auditing of the Safeguarding Implementation Standards and Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Auditing against the standards will be led by UNICEF . In addition, we will work with and ensure the participation of children, young people, staff, associates, and visitors to review, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy.



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GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING SAFEGUARDING IN PRACTICE

1. **AWARENESS:** Raise awareness of child abuse and its risks
2. **PREVENTION:** Provide guidance on how to safeguard children from abuse
3. **REPORTING:** Set up and adhere to a clear and simple reporting procedure
4. **RESPONDING:** Ensure clear action is taken when child abuse is suspected or reported

AWARENESS

The development of an open and responsive culture in all Wounded Healers International programs and within the communities we are active in is essential for safeguarding children. We as an organization and as individual co-workers need the courage to break the silence and taboo of discussing child abuse. Through protected, clear, and honest communication we give and receive both positive and critical feedback.

It is crucial to observe the following basic considerations:

1. Everyone connected to wounded Healers International should understand child abuse in all its implications.
2. We should provide regular opportunities to discuss children's rights and child protection (for example in meetings, informal discussions, or in performance appraisals).
3. We provide regular opportunities for girls and boys (of different ages and backgrounds) to voice their concerns, so that any protection concerns may be heard and addressed.
4. The best interests of the child should be the guide of our child protection process. In cases of conflicting interests, we give priority to the child's welfare.
5. Roles and responsibilities regarding child protection are clearly defined and communicated.
6. All employment contracts and codes of conduct signed by co-workers and representatives of the organization also refer to the child protection policy.



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PREVENTION

To prevent child abuse we need to create and maintain an environment that promotes our organization's core values at Wounded Healers International, Family Strengthening Programmes, and any other facilities and programs of Wounded Healers.

A wide range of actions can support that: The main focus is on implementing suitable human resource recruitment and development approaches. Combined with this, it is essential that we listen carefully to children, take their views seriously, encourage them to participate in discussions on child protection issues, and offer them the opportunity to build trust-filled relationships. It is clear that child abuse is less likely to occur within a context that fosters child participation at all levels.

1. The highest standards of selection, recruitment, and verification procedures are applied.

Applicants for any position, whether co-worker or volunteer, should disclose any previous criminal record. This is accomplished through providing a police check or any other appropriate check, and cross-checking of references.

2. All co-workers receive adequate training and sign the code of conduct confirming their understanding of, and commitment to, our child protection policy.

3. All co-workers are provided with orientation regarding the child protection policy during the first month of their employment.

4. Child protection is a regular topic in all training programs.

5. Through training and the sharing of experiences, we learn the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Child and youth care co-workers treat children with affection but keep clear and supportive boundaries.

6. Children are enabled to assume roles in their own development and protection. They are encouraged to participate in all matters affecting their lives and are involved in discussions on their



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rights. Children discuss what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is and what they can do if they feel something is not right.

7. Each child is offered individual development opportunities tailored to his or her needs and potential. Co-workers receive training and support to put child development activities into action.

8. All child and youth care co-workers have access to family counseling services when needed.

9. Co-workers are encouraged to regularly share experiences within and between facilities and programs regarding how they approach child protection.

10. We pay attention to adequate working conditions in all facilities and programs by implementing the standards of the Wounded Healers International Manual and the Human Resources Manual, also taking into account cultural and legal conditions in each national association.

11. We support awareness-raising and capacity building of parents, community, and religious elders on positive discipline, as alternatives to corporal punishment.

12. Through our advocacy work within communities and societies, child protection systems are strengthened which better prevent and respond to issues of child protection raised by girls or boys.

REPORTING

We take all concerns raised seriously – be it in an Wounded Healers International Family Strengthening Programme or other programs – and take appropriate action. Each national association defines and implements clear reporting and responding procedures, including internal communication lines, and defines the roles and responsibilities of all people involved. Quick and transparent measures that take local legal responsibilities into account are undertaken.



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1. A team of three persons is elected in each facility and program to which child protection concerns can be reported; the members of these child protection teams are known to all children and co-workers. On the one hand, these child protection teams are prepared to react appropriately in crisis situations and they keep and maintain records about any child abuse incident. On the other hand, the central aim of their efforts is to raise awareness for – and prevent – abuse. The team consists of the Program Director, at least one Board, and one other elected co-worker or associated person (e.g. social worker, community leader, etc.). Child protection teams consisting of the director and two co-workers (or a member of the community) are elected in other facilities and programs as well. Ideally, the voice of children and adults participating in programs of Wounded Healers International are taken into account in the election of the child protection teams.

Of course, alleged abusers must not be members of the child protection team. At the national level, the child protection team is led by the national director and consists of two to four persons. They are appointed by the board and monitor the overall status of child protection in the country. A representative of the national child protection team is to be involved in the investigation of any child abuse case. The Project Director is ultimately responsible and provides a bi-annual report to the board regarding the status of child protection.

3. Confidentiality is of utmost importance when dealing with cases of abuse; information is to be handled with sensitivity. The child or any other person who gives information regarding child abuse must be made aware that if he or she reports the case, information about the

alleged abuse will be shared only with those authorized to have access to this information,

i.e. the elected child protection team and other persons involved.

4. Every co-worker is obliged to immediately provide any information he or she has regarding a possible case of child abuse to a member of the child protection team. Any adult who withholds information or covers up any kind of abuse is considered an accomplice.



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5. Children, co-workers or other adults who make reports are supported and protected. A person accused of child abuse is given a fair hearing.

RESPONDING

All forms of child abuse are taken seriously, without exception, and in all Wounded Healers programs, and are responded to according to the gravity of the offense. We ensure that there is always a response, regardless of whether the abuse committed is considered large or small. By responding we guarantee that a transparent and fair procedure is followed so that nobody is falsely convicted and the rights of everyone involved are protected.

1. In all cases of suspected or proven child abuse or neglect, the focus is placed on safeguarding and protecting the child. At the same time, healing measures are provided and the protection of all persons involved is guaranteed. The affected persons receive

the necessary counseling and support.

2. Each national association determines what procedures to follow for different levels of abuse. In the investigation of a child abuse incident, an external expert and a representative from the national child protection team must be involved.

3. In all abuse cases, an internal investigation is carried out by a neutral person who is not involved in the case. This person presents the findings of the investigation to the child protection team, which makes a decision on further steps.

4. The response to child-to-child abuse focuses on what is best for the development and protection of all children involved in such a case.

5. If abuse is committed by an adult, depending on the level of abuse, legal steps are taken in accordance with the national reporting and responding system that defines the levels of responding in each individual case. Where necessary, legal assistance is provided.



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6. There is clear leadership, with one person responsible for handling information and internal and external communication regarding child abuse incidents within the national association. This person is supported by the child protection team.
7. Decisions and actions are taken quickly.
8. Cases are reported to child welfare authorities according to a procedure defined by the national association.
9. Written records of all reported abuse cases and their conclusions are kept in the facility or programme.

CONTACT DETAILS

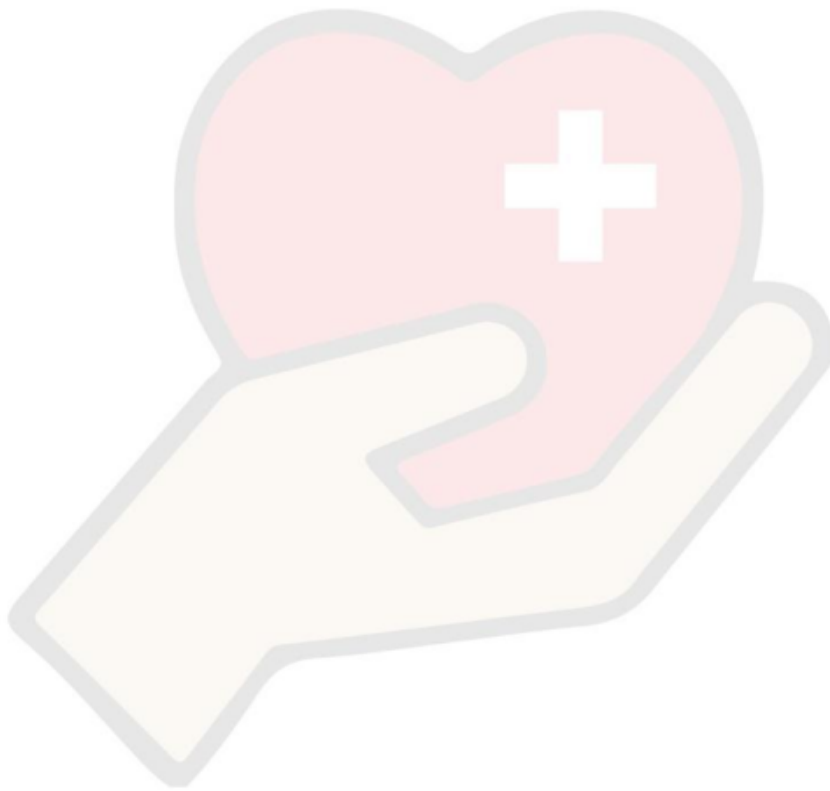
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