

Global Standard: Child Safeguarding

Document control

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Global Standard: Child Safeguarding

1. Introduction

- 1.1 WaterAid believes that clean water, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental to life and everyone has a right to these basic services. Through our work we will come into contact with some of the world's most vulnerable and marginalised communities, where a commitment to child safeguarding is paramount.
- 1.2 The provision and delivery of clean water, sanitation and hygiene through our partners is just one way in which we come into contact with children. Our fundraising and advocacy activities, along with the rise in use of different communication channels, also results in direct and indirect contact with children. Adopting the appropriate level of duty of care to safeguard children is vital for the organisation. We must ensure that those benefiting from, or working with, WaterAid are not harmed in any way through contact with us. As such, we aim to be a child safe organisation in all that we do.
- 1.3 This document outlines the global standard that WaterAid has committed to in order to safeguard children through our work.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 WaterAid recognises that children have a right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse as enshrined in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 2.2 By providing guidance and direction on the responsibility that WaterAid has to the children with whom its staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants, partners and supporters come into contact, the standards and associated guidance aim to reduce risks of child abuse. All members must ensure that all WaterAid representatives are able to understand issues of child safeguarding, and their role and responsibility when interacting with children directly or indirectly.
- 2.3 Furthermore, the standard aims to minimise organisational risks and ensure WaterAid's duty of care is covered through all members implementing procedures that are designed to safeguard children through best practice in the following areas: recruitment, programme design, the use of communication channels, film, photography and management.

- 2.4 The WaterAid [Child Safeguarding Procedure](#) sets out clear reporting requirements should an incident or a concern around child abuse occur.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The commitments made in this standard apply to all WaterAid members and all countries where WaterAid works.
- 3.2 All members and country programmes have a duty to determine specific national legislation or practice that should be included in their procedure. However, these commitments are to be applied and adhered to across WaterAid.
- 3.3 The standard covers all WaterAid representatives which include:
- WaterAid staff (those employed and paid by WaterAid)
 - WaterAid board members/trustees and volunteers (an unpaid worker)
 - Consultants (those engaged by WaterAid on a contract for service rather than an employment contract)
 - WaterAid partners
 - Supporters and other participants on field visits organised by WaterAid.
- 3.4 WaterAid recognises that in line with our mission to transform lives by improving access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities, that the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of children may be the most likely to suffer from abuse and be the least likely to speak up. The standard therefore protect the rights of all children, including those who have a disability, from minority ethnic / faith groups and regardless of gender, sexuality or status.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 WaterAid adopts the UNCRC definition of a child as anyone under the age of 18.

4.2 Access to children

- 4.3 Through our work, there are many ways in which we come into contact with children. WaterAid has defined two categories in which contact could be made:

- 4.3.1 **Direct contact** is usually when there is face to face contact with a child. This may also include being within close proximity to a child or children. This can happen in a number of ways, such as:

- Delivery of safe water and hygiene to a local community
- Field trips to visit local communities, particularly schools
- Organised events
- Work experience in the office
- Film and photography.

4.3.2 **Indirect contact** is when you are not physically close to a child but may still have an ability to communicate or impact a child or group of children in some way. This can happen in a number of ways, such as:

- Emails
- Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Telephone
- Written communication on our website
- Design of programme work

4.4 **Child abuse**

4.5 WaterAid recognises that there are six categories of child abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** when a child is hurt or injured by an adult or another child
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs
- **Sexual abuse:** when a child or young person is used, forced or enticed into taking part in sexual activities
- **Bullying:** will usually include one or all of the above defined categories of abuse and used as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time
- **Exploitation:** this refers to the abuse of children and their rights.

4.6 Racism and other types of discrimination are also considered by WaterAid as forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse, they can harm a child physically and emotionally.

4.7 For further detail of the definitions of child abuse, please refer to the [Child Safeguarding Procedure](#).

5. **Commitments**

- 5.1 As part of the global standard for child safeguarding a number of key commitments have been identified. All members must ensure that:
- 5.1.1 The employment of children under the age of 18 will be in line with national legislation.
- 5.1.2 WaterAid prohibits sexual activity with children (defined as any person under the age of 18). Whilst it acknowledges that the countries within which it operates have differing legal ages of consent it does not differentiate in this policy (unless the national age of consent is higher). WaterAid representatives are in a position of power and authority and this commitment aims to reduce the likelihood of this being misused or misconstrued. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not an acceptable excuse.
- 5.1.3 Although child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, senior leaders are ultimately accountable for implementation and operation of this standard in their country office / member office / department. Senior leaders may delegate the day-to-day responsibility to others in their teams, although they remain ultimately responsible.
- 5.1.4 Where WaterAid has an in-country presence, a Safeguarding Focal Point is designated. They may also be responsible for wider equity and inclusion issues. The focal point will:
- Support in identifying local, national and statutory legislation and/ or guidance and support this to be adopted
 - Monitor the implementation and compliance to the global standards
 - Champion child safeguarding considerations at all times
 - Support any reported incidents to be managed effectively in line with the reporting procedure outlined in the [Child Safeguarding Procedure](#).
- 5.1.5 The name, contact details and the role of the focal point will be clearly communicated to all staff and WaterAid representatives.
- 5.1.6 All WaterAid representatives are aware of their duty to safeguard children and to report any incidents and/or allegations of abuse or concerns for the welfare of a child using the reporting procedure outlined in the [Child Safeguarding Procedure](#). Requirements to report to statutory or other bodies should be identified for each country.

- 5.1.7 Recruitment procedures are introduced to minimise the risk of recruiting and retaining people who are likely to pose a threat to children. Where appropriate, and in line with national legislation, criminal records / police checks will be carried out on those employed by or representing WaterAid, who are considered to have direct contact with children.
- 5.1.8 The risks of safeguarding of children are always considered and assessed when undertaking programme design, management and using different communication channels.
- 5.1.9 All WaterAid representatives are aware of child safeguarding requirements and the risks to children. All WaterAid representatives will receive information relating to WaterAid's global standards during induction and briefings. Where needed, further training will be provided for relevant individuals, for example, Safeguarding Focal Points.
- 5.1.10 Non-compliance with these standards, as outlined in the [Global Code of Conduct](#) will be treated as gross misconduct and subject to disciplinary action as per the disciplinary policy in country. It may result in the termination of engagement with those representing WaterAid in a non-employed capacity.
- 5.2 To support the above commitments please refer to the [Child Safeguarding Procedure](#).
- 5.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if there is a significant change in legislation and/or practice.