



**Windle Trust**  
**International**

# **Safeguarding and Protection Policy**

## **SECTION 1**

### **Commitment Statement**

As an organisation working with children and adults who may be vulnerable and at risk of harm Windle Trust International will:

- Ensure that all Windle Trust International personnel are aware of and act in accordance with their personal responsibilities.
- Protect, maintain and uphold the human rights of children and adults at risk of harm.
- Eliminate discrimination including sectarian, racist, sexist or disability prejudice.
- Take steps to prevent bullying or exploitation, and challenge it if it is found.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with and have access to a copy of this policy and know whom to contact for further information and advice.
- Make sure children and adults at risk of harm or parents know how to voice their concerns and obtain help if they are concerned.
- Ensure that everyone knows how to report any alleged malpractice or negligence (often known as 'whistleblowing').
- Ensure effective procedures are in place for responding to complaints, concerns and allegations of suspected or actual abuse.
- Ensure that everyone knows what their responsibilities are and what they should do.
- Ensure that there is documentation of any event of concern.
- Ensure that approved recruitment procedures are followed

### **Policy Statement**

Windle Trust International seeks to provide an environment where its staff and associates can work effectively to serve the community and for their own personal development. The organisation is committed to ensuring that everyone, specifically those who are vulnerable, are kept safe from harm while they are involved with the organisation. Employees have a personal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of all children, young people and others at risk of harm by protecting them from abuse and exploitation.

Windle Trust International is aware that the opportunities and services provided through our programmes can create a power differential between those who are employed by us and (potential) programme participants. We acknowledge that there is a risk for this power imbalance to be exploited to acquire payments, gifts, services, and/or sexual favours. This Safeguarding and Protection policy has been developed to ensure the maximum protection of programme participants from exploitation and to clarify the responsibilities of our staff, volunteers and visitors to the projects and the standards of behaviour expected of them.

Windle Trust International recognises that all adults and children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. Such rights are prescribed in, among other documents, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and often in the national laws of the countries where we work.

Windle Trust International condemns exploitation and inappropriate behaviour, and is committed to taking action for the protection of programme participants. Whilst the primary aim of this policy is to protect participants and/or beneficiaries, it is also designed to protect staff, the organisation, and its partners. The policy applies to all our staff, volunteers, trustees, consultants and visitors to the projects.

## Key Principles

WTI's Safeguarding and Protection Policy are guided by the following principles:

### **1 Best interests of the child:**

In all actions concerning children and when dealing with a concern for the safety or wellbeing of a child, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

### **2 Zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation:**

WTI has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation. Windle Trust International will not knowingly engage personnel to be in direct contact with children or access communities whom we work with if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing and will take immediate action upon report of any suspected child abuse or exploitation.

### **3 Shared responsibility:**

WTI believes child safeguarding and protection is a shared responsibility, which requires all personnel committing to and upholding the principles of this policy. WTI will also ensure that all partner organisations involved in the implementation of projects and activities have appropriate child safeguarding measures to implement the minimum standards outlined in this Policy.

### **4 Accountability and Openness:**

WTI will continue to strengthen its internal child safeguarding systems to ensure accountability to children and the families and communities with which it works. Specific child safeguarding roles and responsibilities will be delegated to staff to effectively embed child safe organisational practice across all programs, operations and activities. WTI will ensure an organisational child safe culture where any issues or concerns of child safeguarding or poor practice can be raised and discussed.

## Context and Relevance

The statements and principles set out above provide the foundations for the detailed policy provisions that follow. Before considering those details, however, it is important that all our staff, partners and individuals with who we work understand the reasons for setting out our commitment to safeguarding and protection.

Windle Trust International works primarily with children and young people who have been affected by conflict. They may have endured displacement, sometimes within a country and sometimes by seeking refuge outside their country of origin. Their legal status is sometimes unclear and complex. Many of them have lived, for varying periods, in situations where there is the risk of danger, violence and displacement. For conflict-affected communities in such situations, the notion of universal rights to specified public goods such as education, health care or the rule of law are a chimera. Instead of a guaranteed right to education, children and young people risk exclusion, discrimination or exploitation largely because they neither

know what their rights may be nor do they have the means to exercise those rights. In essence, they are weak and powerless and that makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

In the last decade we have become increasingly aware that individuals within institutions that are specifically mandated to protect and serve poor and vulnerable people – whether it be churches, healthcare institutions or schools – may abuse the power of their position and break the duty of care that they are obliged to discharge. Given the context in which WTI is operating, we must recognise that the people with whom we are working are at risk of exploitation and abuse. This may happen in a primary or secondary school where Windle Trust International is working – either directly or through partners – but it may also happen at tertiary level particularly in the context of securing access to scholarships. A scholarship is a rare and valuable opportunity and we need to be aware that it illustrates a profound power imbalance between those who yearn for the opportunity it will provide and those with the power to open such doors.

As with any policy that is designed to be organisation-wide in scope, this one seeks to achieve a balance in a context that is complex and contested. On the one hand we wish to be clear where WTI stands as an organisation and the responsibilities on all of our staff, associates and volunteers in terms of the provision of universally and often nationally recognised rights and protections. On the other hand we recognise too that what may be inappropriate or offensive in one culture may be accepted and uncontroversial in another. For this reason, whilst the policy and commitment statement set out above provide the foundations for what follows, we acknowledge too that each country office may need to adjust the details and examples to suit their own social and legal context. Such flexibility is not a dilution of our organisational commitments but a reflection of our determination to make them relevant, appropriate and understandable in a range of contexts. Any amendments will need to be formally approved by the Executive Director on behalf of the trustees and will be reported to them in their reviews of this policy.

## SECTION 2

### Understanding the basis of our policy

#### What constitutes harm?

Harm is defined as:

- Injury
- Hurt
- Damage
- Loss

Harm is caused by abuse or exploitation which may be:

- Neglect
- Emotional or psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial or material
- Discriminatory

or a combination of any of these.

#### Categories of Harm

**Neglect** is the failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs that damages or impairs their health or development or failing to prevent harm.

**Physical abuse** involves deliberate injury to the person, however slight. This would include injuries that are inconsistent with explanations provided, unexplained fractures to any part of the body or spinal injuries but it might also be reflected in incontinence or the restriction of freedom of movement.

**Emotional or psychological abuse** is the emotional mistreatment of a person that adversely affects their behaviour, wellbeing or emotional or cognitive development.

**Sexual abuse** is the involvement of the person in sexual activities which they do not want or truly understand, or to which they are unable to give valid or effective consent. This may involve rape or other criminal behaviour; sexual assault or sexual harassment; overtly sexual behaviour, often inappropriate to age or development; exposure to inappropriate material.

**Financial or material abuse** is the theft or misuse of a person's money or property. Signs of possible financial or material abuse include unusual or inappropriate financial transactions or the withholding of a financial or material entitlement.

**Discriminatory abuse** occurs when someone picks on a person or treats them unfairly because something about them is different. This can include unfair or less favourable treatment due to a person's race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexuality, appearance or cultural background. Such behaviour may include harassment, threatening or obscene behaviour; bullying; or threatening, offensive or insulting language.

## SECTION THREE

### Putting the Policy into Practice

We take a threefold approach to participant protection:

- **Awareness** – educating all staff, volunteers, interns and visitors to the projects on the Code of Conduct
- **Deterrence** – making public, particularly in recruiting staff and volunteers, Windle Trust International's procedures and reference checks put in place to prevent incidents
- **Openness and Reporting** – developing a culture where staff can be open about concerns, and a procedure whereby staff and volunteers can report concerns

#### Awareness

- 1 Country Directors should review this policy and ensure that it is appropriate given the local context and in terms of language used. It may be edited and adapted as appropriate, subject to final approval by the Executive Director.
- 2 Managers should distribute copies of the WTI Code of Conduct (see annex 2) to staff in relevant languages, including local languages as appropriate. A copy should be included in appointment and induction material for new staff.
- 3 All staff, visitors, and volunteers must have a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- 4 All new staff inductions must include a briefing on this policy.
- 5 All staff will be expected to read this Code of Conduct and sign an agreement to follow it.
- 6 All staff are responsible for reporting any concerns or incidents to their line manager, the Country Director or the Executive Director, whichever may be most appropriate.
- 7 Country staff are responsible for ensuring that communities, schools and other organisations are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of Windle Trust International staff.
- 8 Monitoring adherence to the policy will be included in WTI's internal audit processes.

#### Deterrence

- 1 All staff must sign the attached Participant Protection Declaration to abide by the WTI Code of Conduct.
- 2 Every workplace will display the Code of Conduct and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- 3 All jobs advertised will be with a job description and person specification that will refer to Windle Trust International's Code of Conduct. Referees will be asked to comment on an applicant's suitability in relation to this safeguarding policy.
- 4 All new staff are required to sign the Participant Protection Declaration before finalisation of contract.

## Openness and Reporting

- 1 Each country programme office will appoint one person to be a focal point to ensure implementation of and adherence to the standards and behaviours set out in this policy. That person will be responsible for ensuring dissemination and understanding of this policy and the standards of behaviours that are expected; arranging for training for other staff and for ensuring application of the policy.
- 2 If you have a concern about a Windle Trust International staff member, supporter or visitor, you should complete the incident form (Appendix 4), report your concern to your line manager, the Country Director or the Executive Director. The reporting of suspected or actual abuse is a professional obligation.
- 3 The Manager and/or Country Director will discuss the concern and agree further action: Considerations should include local culture and traditions, relevant provisions of national law, the best interest of the victim, the risk of re-offence, and our own organisational values and reputation, and the expectations we have of our staff.
- 4 Every complaint should be investigated fully and appropriately. Protecting the rights of the victims, and also those of potential future victims, should take precedence over a desire to protect our organisational reputation. Our organisational response should be driven by integrity, and the imperative to do the right thing.
- 5 Serious abuses where a law has been broken (particularly rape and assault) should be reported to the local authorities unless there are exceptional circumstances not to do so. A decision not to report serious abuses must be approved by the Country Director and is subject to confirmation by the Executive Director.
- 6 If the alleged incident involves a Windle Trust International employee, that individual will be suspended or removed from the area where the incident took place until the facts are established and conclusions can be drawn. The decision to suspend must be taken by the Manager or Country Director and is not open to challenge by the individual involved – or by the Executive Director if it involves the Country Director.
- 7 In conducting an enquiry into allegations of wrongdoing by commission or omission, both the alleged victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) shall be allowed to be represented or accompanied by a colleague or friend if they wish.

### Applying the principles

All those working with children and adults at risk of harm must:

- Promote their welfare, health and wellbeing and take every reasonable precaution to minimise risk of harm
- Understand and apply the safeguarding policy for working safely with children and adults at risk of harm
- Undertake training to the appropriate level to support you in your role
- Act appropriately and be able to challenge inappropriate behaviour in others
- Know how to follow the procedure for reporting concerns and alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.

## Appendix 1

### DEFINITIONS

*Child:* An individual below the age of 18 years, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. (Taken from the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

*Visitor:* Any individual who visits a settlement, school or college on behalf of or a guest of Windle Trust International (WTI) and comes into contact with WTI participants. This includes journalists, consultants, donors, friends, trustees etc.

*Bullying:* Inappropriate behaviour, whether verbal or physical, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. Examples include manipulation of the person's reputation by gossip or ridicule; social exclusion or isolation; threats abuse; etc.

*Harassment:* Any act or conduct including verbal and written if the conduct is unwelcome to the recipient and could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating, or intimidating. Examples include: ridicule; shoving or assault; etc.

*Sexual harassment:* Is an act of physical intimacy; request for sexual favours; verbal or written communication or gesture that could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating, or intimidating.

*Participants:* "Participants" include beneficiaries of our projects and other community members where we work, as well as WTI and associated project or government staff.

*Rape:* An act of non-consensual sexual intercourse.

*Exploitation:* Is using one's position of authority, influence or control over resources, to pressure, force or manipulate someone to do something against their will. This includes for example threatening to withhold support or assistance from a beneficiary, threatening to make false claims about a person in public, or any other negative repercussions in the work place or community.

*Violence:* Includes incidents where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, health and well-being.

## Appendix 2

### Windle Trust International's Code of Conduct:

The Code of Conduct set out below must be followed by all WTI staff, interns, volunteers, journalists, and partner staff. It should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense, with the best interests of participants as the primary consideration. Country Directors should review this policy and ensure that it is appropriate given the local context, in terms of language used, and edit and adapt them as appropriate, subject to final approval from the Executive Director.

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct has been developed to ensure the maximum protection of programme participants from exploitation or inappropriate behaviour including: bullying; verbal, physical or sexual harassment; rape; exploitation; intimidation; racial or ethnic discrimination or harassment; behaviour that shows a lack of respect for the dignity of others; behaving in an obviously culturally insensitive manner; or attempt to commit fraud, blackmail or to accept or solicit a bribe.

This Code clarifies the responsibilities of Windle Trust International staff, volunteers, interns, journalists, partner staff and visitors to the projects and the standards of behaviour expected of them. Employees who do not adhere to this code of conduct or fail to report on others they know or suspect are not adhering to this Code of Conduct may be subject to formal disciplinary procedures.

##### Minimising risk situations

**Do:** avoid placing yourself in a compromising or vulnerable position; fill out an incident report form if a situation occurs involving a participant which may be subject to misinterpretation.

**Do not:** be alone with a participant in a closed space if possible (leave the door open unless the need for confidentiality is dominant); show favouritism; or spend excessive amounts of time with one participant.

##### Sexual behaviour

**Do not:** engage in sexually provocative activities with participants; make physical contact with a participant in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way; sleep in the same bed as a participant; use your power and position to make sexual demands.

##### Physical behaviour

**Do:** wait for appropriate physical contact, such as hugging or holding hands, to be initiated by the participant.

**Do not:** discipline participants by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care such as food, shelter or medical attention.

##### Psychosocial Behaviour

**Do:** try to be alert to physical and emotional states of participants you are working with; avoid taking advantage of your position and authority; always report abuse or suspected abuse.

**Do not:** display discriminatory, prejudicial or oppressive behaviour or language towards participants; act in any way that intends to embarrass shame, humiliate or degrade a participant; or promise secrecy to a participant who discloses abuse to you.

##### Peer abuse

**Do:** be aware of the potential for peer abuse; **avoid** placing participants in high-risk peer situations.

## Appendix 3

### WINDLE TRUST INTERNATIONAL

#### PARTICIPANT PROTECTION DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

Name: .....

Job title or student status .....

Based at: .....

hereby declare that:

- 1 I have never been disciplined for misconduct in relation to participants. I have never been convicted or subject to any investigation for unlawful acts involving the abuse or ill treatment of participants. I am aware that if I fail to declare any such incidents now, this will later result in disciplinary action, which may include immediate dismissal without notice or benefits such as pension, regardless of labour laws governing the contract.
- 2 I have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in Participant Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained in it and accept the importance of following participant protection policies and practice while working with WTI.
- 3 I undertake to draw to the attention of my managers any behaviour or suspicion of sexual exploitation, ill treatment or abuse of participants (including bullying, verbal, physical or sexual harassment, rape, intimidation, victimisation, racial or ethnic discrimination or harassment, behaviour that shows a lack of respect for the dignity of other, behaving in an obviously culturally insensitive manner, attempt to commit fraud, blackmail, or accept or solicit a bribe) in projects supported or implemented by Windle Trust International. I am aware that failure to declare any such knowledge may result in disciplinary action.
- 4 I have been informed that in the event of my being suspected of inappropriate or abusive behaviour in relation to participants, Windle Trust International reserves the right to take steps set out in this policy, including provisional suspension from duties and/or disciplinary action, which may include immediate dismissal without notice or benefits.
- 5 I have been informed that, in the event of termination of contract on the grounds of an incident that is against the Code of Conduct, Windle Trust International reserves the right to inform other agencies who apply for references of the reason for the termination of contract.

Signed .....

Name .....

Date .....

## Appendix 4

### WINDLE TRUST INTERNATIONAL

#### PARTICIPANT PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT FORM

If you have knowledge of an incident that has occurred that is against the WTI Code of Conduct, or that a participant's safety might be in danger, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge as promptly as possible. Please note for confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It will be held in a secure location and will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**Your name**

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**Your job title or Role**

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**Your e-mail address and telephone number**

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**Name of alleged perpetrator**

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**Name of participant(s)/victim(s) against whom the incident occurred**

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**Gender of participant/alleged victim**  
MALE / FEMALE

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**Age of participant** (only complete for adult if age is related to his/her vulnerability)

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**Address of participant**

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**Guardians / carers of participant (if a child)**

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**Date, time of alleged incident**

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**Location of alleged incident**

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