



World YWCA

Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct

Current operational version

November 2013

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1. Introduction

Since 1855, the World YWCA Movement has been a platform for empowering women and girls to advocate for social, political, economic and civic change through our leadership and collective action. With a global outreach of 25 million women and girls through 108 affiliated member associations, the YWCA movement delivers programmes, initiatives and events with a wide range of stakeholders. This work also includes direct engagement with children.

Recalling past commitments to the protection of children at World Council Meetings¹, combined with our commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its related Protocols, and consistent with appropriate development practice², the World YWCA recognises the need for a Child Protection Policy. Given the diversity of the movement and varying developmental contexts, the World YWCA is guided by the definition of a child noted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: 'a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the laws applicable to the child '.

This Child Protection Policy outlines our stand against all forms of abuse against the child. It provides a policy direction to our programming and development work in specific relation to children. The policy applies to the World YWCA Board, Staff, interns and volunteers.

Guiding Principles: Building on the Human Rights Based Approach to our programming and field of work, the World YWCA seeks to promote the following principles in its engagement with children:

Principle 1: Encourage safe, empowering and inclusive spaces and opportunities for children of all backgrounds, especially girls, to learn, participate and grow their civic and leadership roles.

Principle 2: Ensure our planning and programming approaches incorporate diverse experiences and situational contexts faced by children, especially when engaging with children from conflict and post-conflict zones.

¹ These include: 1959 World Council in Mexico, Cuernavaca, Mexico's recommendation on education and the 1971 Accra, Ghana resolution on social change, children and education development.

² Development partners and donors are now requesting their partners to submit their Child Protection Policy as one of the critical statement of shared values with regards to the protection of children.

Principle 3: Advocate for institutionalised measures and practices within the YWCA movement to minimise the risk of any form of abuse against children. Advocacy areas can include: developing and/or updating child protection policies and delivering awareness training on child protection strategies, development trends facing children, and mechanisms to deal with violations of children's rights. It also includes ensuring clear boundaries between goodwill volunteerism and child labour/exploitation³.

Principle 4: Facilitate informed, prompt and confidential responses to any specific child protection violation and on issues that may arise within its operational activities.

Principle 5: Advocate for policies, best practice methods, behavioural change approaches and law reform targeted at ensuring the rights, needs and interests of the child are protected at all levels. This includes proper counselling services and appropriate interventions in cases where a child's rights are violated.

Principle 6: Engage in partnerships, networking and information sharing around child rights and protection themes.

Principle 7: Ensure periodic review of the World YWCA Child Protection Policy by the Board, and for the General Secretary to include information on any children's rights violations within the World YWCA movement in her annual report to the World YWCA Board. In cases of gross violations, the General Secretary should inform the Board for immediate and appropriate action to be taken in such circumstances.

Recognising that the World YWCA is a federation of member associations, each individual member is encouraged to draw guidance and inspiration from the Policy. The full monitoring and accountability of this Policy Statement lies with the World YWCA Board.

³ While the concept of exploitation/child labour may depend on different contexts, the World Office references the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. Article 3d articulates child labour to be 'work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children'.

2. Application

For the purpose of this policy, a child/young person is considered to be a person under the age of 18.

Protecting children/young people from harm is the responsibility of all those who participate in the work of World YWCA. Personnel of the World YWCA, during their time of association with the organisation, may at some point be in a position where they will have contact with children or where they will work with children. This policy applies to:

- all staff;
- all volunteers, including interns and work experience students;
- all contractors, e.g., consultants;
- all Board Members; and
- all affiliated member associations.

Each person is responsible for having a thorough knowledge of this policy and the procedures set out below, acting in accordance with this policy and complying with the World YWCA Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Breach of this policy or the Child Protection Code of Conduct constitutes an act of misconduct and is grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination of employment.

3. Principles

This policy is informed by a set of principles that derive from the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child/Young Person:

- All children/young people have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation.
- All children/young people should be encouraged to fulfil their potential and inequalities should be challenged.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children/young people.
- World YWCA has a duty of care to children/young people with whom we work and with our affiliated member associations
- World YWCA's partners have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for the children/young people in their programmes.

4. Statement of responsibility

This policy statement affirms World YWCA's commitment to the welfare of children/young people and their protection from abuse and exploitation. World YWCA recognises that the abuse and exploitation of children/young people happens in all countries and societies across the world. All child abuse involves the violation of children's/young people's rights.

Child abuse is never acceptable and a commitment to children's/young people's rights in general also means a commitment to safeguard the children/young people with whom World YWCA is in contact. World YWCA will not permit a person to work with children/young people if that person poses an unacceptable risk to children's/young people's safety or wellbeing.

All staff are responsible for promoting children's/young people's rights and championing the protection of children/young people. Management is responsible for the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all parties comply with the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Particular management responsibilities as set out in this policy include building child/young person protection awareness, advocacy, rigorous recruitment and selection practices, training, and responding appropriately to allegations.

5. Action statement

World YWCA will meet its commitment to safeguard children/young people through the following means:

Awareness:

Ensure that all staff, volunteers and others are aware of the problem of child abuse and the risks to children/young people.

Prevention:

Ensure, through awareness and personal and professional conduct, that staff and others minimise the risk to children/young people.

Reporting:

Ensure that staff and others have clear steps to follow where concerns arise regarding the safety of children/young people.

Responding:

Ensure that action is taken, without denying procedural fairness principles to the accused, to support and protect children/young people where concerns arise regarding possible abuse. In order that the above standards of reporting and responding are met, World YWCA will ensure that it:

- takes seriously any concerns raised;
- takes positive steps to ensure the protection of children/young people who are the subject of any concerns;
- supports children/young people, staff, or other adults who raise concerns or who are the subject of concerns;
- acts appropriately and effectively in instigating or co-operating with any subsequent process of investigation;
- demonstrates responsibility to and respect for children/young people by being sensitive in our communications that involve them; and
- is supported by stringent recruitment and selection measures that have been designed to minimise the possibility of recruiting persons who may pose a risk to children/young people.

6. What is child abuse?

Child abuse can be exploitation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child/young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child/young person's self-esteem. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child/young person.

Neglect is the failure to provide the child/young person with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision to the extent that the child/young person's health and development are at risk.

Child sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child/young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own or another's sexual stimulation or gratification, or economic gain.

Exploitation

Exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child.

There are two main forms of child exploitation that are recognised:

Sexual exploitation: the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes: this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of another as well as personal sexual gratification.

Economic exploitation: the use of a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour. Economic exploitation implies the idea of a certain gain or profit through the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. The material interest has an impact on the economy of a certain unit, be it the state, the community or the family

7. Implementation

World YWCA commits itself to a number of processes in adopting a safe culture for children and young people.

7.1 Vigilance in recruitment and selection

All persons covered by this policy must adhere to strict guidelines (Annexure B) in the recruitment and selection process. The recruitment guidelines will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they accurately reflect child/young person safe recruiting and screening standards consistent with global standards and national legislation. This will include:

- a clear and bold statement that confirms World YWCA's commitment to child/young person protection in advertising all relevant positions;
- adopting 'best practice' recruitment and selection techniques;
- conducting verbal reference checks; and
- conducting national police checks.

During the recruitment process, immediate disclosure of prior offenses related to children is required during the application process. Applicants for staff positions that have contact with children and young people must have criminal record checks and verbal referee checks.

Applicants who will be working with children must answer behavioural-based interview questions additionally. World YWCA will not permit a person to work with children/young people if that person poses an unacceptable risk to children's/young people's safety or wellbeing. Guidelines on recruitment practices, including interview and reference check questions, are set out at Annexure B.

7.2 World YWCA Child Protection Code of Conduct

All persons covered by this policy are to be informed by the Head of Human Resources of the policies and procedures upon beginning employment. At that time, the Child Protection Code of Conduct set out in Annexure A must be signed.

7.3 Police checks

World YWCA will have police checks carried out in accordance with international standards; individuals must provide consent and must be informed of what the certification will be used for.

All personnel in contact with children/young people will be asked to obtain a Police Check or sign an authority to obtain a Police Check. This will include all full-time, part-time and casual staff, volunteers, consultants, and contractors including long-term contract appointments, regardless of location.

A criminal record check must be obtained for each country the person has lived in for at least 12 months within the past five years *and* for all of his or her countries of citizenship.

If a potential staff member, volunteer, or consultant declines to undergo a police check, the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

Where a police check cannot be obtained, all reasonable measures—these include a statutory declaration outlining the efforts to obtain a foreign police check and a disclosure of all charges and convictions related to child exploitation—will be undertaken to ensure the person does not pose a risk to children/young people.

7.4 Programme planning and implementation

World YWCA will ensure that all partners' funded activities are assessed for their risks to children/young people.

High-risk activities will be identified and documented. Throughout the lifecycle of these activities and programmes, risk assessments will help identify practical measures to reduce or remove risk to children/young people.

Risks to children/young people will also be considered when developing and implementing disaster response activities.

Member associations implementing an activity hold the primary responsibility for ensuring that risks to children/young people are managed effectively.

7.5 Training and development

During the induction process, persons covered under this policy will receive information from the appropriate management relating to World YWCA's Child/Young Person Protection Policy. Further training will be tailored to individual team requirements.

8. Reporting concerns of child abuse

8.1 Incident reporting

All allegations, beliefs or suspicions of policy non-compliance or breach of code, sexual, physical or emotional abuse, exploitation, or neglect (past or present) by a World YWCA Member Association staff member, volunteer, consultant, donor, partner or board member to be reported **immediately** to the relevant National General Secretary/Executive Director. Appropriate professional advice will be sought. Incident reporting of breaches of the code, policy non-compliance, abuse or exploitation is compulsory.

A child/young person reporting an incident must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child/young person from further potential abuse or victimisation. The family of the child/young person victim should be informed of the allegation and action proposed and they should be consulted where possible as to the process to be followed.

When concerns arise, all parties will be directed through a formal complaints process by the Head of Human Resources. The Head of Human resources may consult with legal counsel and/or police authorities where appropriate, and steer the investigation process accordingly. In the event that the Child Protection Code of Conduct is broken, the YWCA will pursue disciplinary action and/or termination of employment.

Additionally, allegations and charges of child abuse and exploitation will be immediately reported to relevant partners and donors.

8.2 Distance the alleged perpetrator

The best interests of the child/young person may warrant the standing down of the alleged perpetrator during an investigation. A person who has stood down will receive full pay and is entitled to a just process that does not presuppose guilt or innocence. The allegations should not be discussed or communicated to any person outside the process until a final outcome is known. The reasons for a decision to enforce that a person stands down must be fully documented.

8.3 Document the incident

As soon as possible (within a period of 24 hours of the disclosure), the person receiving the disclosure must fully document the allegation, including the time, place, witnesses on the Incident Report at Annexure C. This report will be used as the basis for investigation and possibly used in court if charges are forthcoming. The person responsible for reporting this information should refrain from taking notes in front of the child who is disclosing.

The person to whom information is disclosed must be careful how they respond to the child. Some guidelines to observe are as follows: look at the child directly; do not appear shocked and calmly and seriously accept what the child says; do not push for information or ask leading questions; finally, affirm the child's decision to disclose the information, and then let them know what must happen next and that someone else must be notified.

8.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting procedure. It is unacceptable and potentially defamatory for concerns of child abuse (and abusers) to be spread throughout the organisation rather than being directed through a formal complaints process. All participants must understand the importance of following the set reporting lines when concerns arise. Confidentiality protects the child/young person, the person notifying, the respondent, and the organisation, and ensures a fair and proper process.

8.5 Investigation of complaints

Internal investigations will undertake a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. The investigation may consist of interviews with witnesses and others as appropriate, collection of information about the alleged conduct, gathering of documentation, or other procedures as appropriate. The individual alleged to have violated this World YWCA policy would have the opportunity to present his or her view of the events in question. World YWCA will hold its determination until the investigation is completed.

Physical and/or sexual abuse and exploitation of a child/young person is a criminal offence. The World YWCA and its member association would be required to notify relevant national authorities when there are reasonable grounds for reporting abuse.

8.6 Reprisal

World YWCA will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against any staff member, volunteer, or consultant who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.

9. Use of Child photos and information

Pictures, images, or other likenesses of children/young people and/or information related to children/young people that could compromise their care and protection will not be made available through any form of communication media, metadata, or text descriptions. Images with corresponding text which may identify a child must be removed. Images of children/young people require informed consent from the child and parent or guardian before photographing or filming a child/young person and published and should not be accompanied by detailed information relating to their place of residence. Images should always portray children/young people in a dignified manner. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used

10. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by World YWCA every five years or earlier if warranted. This policy and code of conduct is endorsed by the World YWCA General Secretary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. R. - 60'.

Signature

Date: November 2013

ANNEX A CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

For the purpose of this policy, a child/young person will be considered to be a person under the age of 18.

I, _____, understand that I am accountable for my actions, and I agree that while implementing World YWCA activities I will:

treat children/young people with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;

not use language or behaviour towards children/young people that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;

not engage children/young people in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts. I understand that mistaken belief of the age of the child/young person is not a defence;

wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children/young people;

not invite unaccompanied children/young people into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;

not sleep close to unsupervised children/young people unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my manager's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;

use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children/young people or to access child exploitation material, including child abuse material and child pornography material, through any medium;

refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children/young people (excluding my own children);

refrain from hiring children/young people for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;

comply with all relevant international and national legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;

immediately report policy non-compliance, breaches of code of conduct, concerns or allegations of child abuse by personnel and volunteers in accordance with appropriate procedures; and

inform World YWCA if I am under investigation or found guilty of any offenses related to children abuse and exploitation before or during the course of my association with the organisation.

Use of children/young people's sounds and images for work-related purposes

When recording, photographing or filming a child for work-related purposes, I must:

before recording, photographing or filming a child/young person, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images;

before recording, photographing or filming a child/young person, obtain informed consent from the child/young person or a parent or guardian of the child/young person. As part of this I must explain how the recording, photograph or film will be used;

ensure recordings, photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children/young people in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children/young people should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;

ensure recordings and images are honest representations of the context and the facts; and

ensure file labels, metadata and text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child/young person when sending images electronically.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person associated with World YWCA, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse when undertaking World YWCA activities on behalf of the organisation.

I have read this Child Protection Policy and agree to uphold the principles and follow the guidelines contained herein. I understand that non-compliance with or a breach of the World YWCA Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct is grounds for disciplinary

action, may lead to dismissal from my duties and/or employment, and may result in legal proceedings.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

ANNEX B RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDELINES

The World YWCA is deeply committed to protecting children from violence, abuse, and exploitation in all their forms and to promoting children's rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention of Elimination and Discrimination of Women (CEDAW).

The World YWCA will take all reasonable steps to safeguard the interests, rights, and well-being of those children with whom the organisation comes into contact and works with. In standing by this declaration to protect children, the World YWCA will strictly adhere to the guidelines laid out in this annexure.

Child/young person related positions must be identified by the World YWCA at the requisition stage of recruitment. If a position has direct contact with children/young people on a regular basis it must be deemed to be a "working with children/young people position". If a position involves or may involve contact with children due to the nature of the work environment, as described during the application process or in the advertisement, then it is to be considered a "contact with children" position. All applicants will receive as part of the recruitment package a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. If the applicant is offered the position they will be expected to sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct as part of acceptance processes.

Past History

Upon applying for a position with the World YWCA, all applicants must immediately disclose any convictions involving children/young person.

It is the Recruitment Manager's responsibility to ensure that the following practices are implemented: applicants for staff, volunteer, or consultant positions that may have contact with children and young people must have criminal record checks and verbal referee checks, and applicants who will be working with children must answer behavioural-based interview questions, detailed below, as well. Additionally, the Recruitment Manager must ask every applicant to provide a complete work history and ensure that there are no suspicious patterns or unexplained gaps in the applicant's work history. Copies of all qualifications must be obtained and retained on the applicant's file.

Interviews

If there are any unaccounted for breaks in employment the Recruitment Manager should use the interview to discuss these with the applicant.

The Recruitment Manager must inform all candidates that World YWCA is a child-safe employer and these questions are standard for **all** interviews.

Question for all positions

What is your understanding of the World YWCA Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct?

How do you think it would apply to you in this role and what steps would you take to comply with the Policy/Code of Conduct?

Behavioural-Based Questions

Do you have any concerns about working directly with children/young people?

Have you worked with children/young people before? If so, what are some of the methods you have used to motivate children/young people?

Please tell us about a time in which a child/young person you were responsible for did something very unexpected or inappropriate. What happened and how did you handle it?

Can you give an example of where you have acted to protect a child/ young person? What did you learn from this and how has it impacted on your current work practices.

Reference Questions

The Recruitment Manager must inform each referee that World YWCA is a child-safe employer and advise that this question is standard for all reference checks:

"Do you have any concerns about recommending this person to work directly with children/young people?"

Reference checks can also be used to raise any issues that may have been cause for concern during the interview process.

ANNEX C INCIDENT REPORT

Name of complainant:	
Address/contact details:	
Age:	
Sex:	
Name of alleged victim (if different from complainant):	
Address/contact details:	
Age:	
Sex:	
Name(s) and address of parents, if applicable:	
Has the alleged victim given consent to the completion of this form?	YES NO
Date of incident(s):	
Time of incident(s):	
Location of incident(s):	
Physical and emotional state of victim (Describe any cuts, bruises, lacerations, behaviour, and mood):	
Witnesses' names and contact information:	
Brief description of incident(s) (attach extra pages if necessary):	

Name of accused person(s):	
Position of accused person(s):	
Organisation accused person(s) works for:	
Address of accused person(s) (if known):	
Age:	
Sex:	
Have the police been contacted?	YES NO
If yes, what happened?	
If no, does the alleged victim want police assistance, and if not, why?	
Has the alleged victim been informed about available medical treatment?	YES NO
If yes, has the alleged victim sought medical treatment for the incident?	YES NO
If yes, who provided treatment?	
What is the diagnosis and prognosis?	
What immediate security measures have been undertaken for victim?	
Who is responsible for ensuring safety plan (Name, Title, Organisation):	

Any other pertinent information provided in interview (including contact made with other Organisations, if any)	
Details of referrals and advice on health, psychosocial, legal needs of victim made by person completing report:	
Report completed by: <i>Name</i> <i>Position/Organisation</i> <i>Date/Time/Location</i>	
Has the complainant been informed about the organisation's procedures for dealing with complaints?	YES NO
Complainant's consent for data to be shared with other entities (check any that apply):	Police Other (Specify) _____
Date report forwarded to relevant management structure	

ANNEX D IDENTIFYING AND LOGGING PROGRAMME RISKS

As stated in this policy under section 6.4, all partners' funded World YWCA⁴ activities involving children/young people are to undergo a risk assessment. This is implemented by maintaining a log of the risk assessments in a document as outlined in this annexure.

Risk assessments are to be performed by staff members and/or volunteers of the World YWCA/relevant member association on an annual basis or more frequently if needed. Since it is possible for assessments to be subject to individual judgments on a situation, participation should include more than one staff member and or volunteer.

Types of Risk

Due to the structure of the YWCA and the relationship of the World YWCA to its member organisations, it should be acknowledged that each member association may provide different services, programmes, and activities resulting in different risks for each. It is especially important to recognise the risks of programmes and activities carried out in areas where children are already vulnerable within their communities.

Examples of risks include, but are not limited to, the safety of children/young people returning home from YWCA activities and programmes, the safety of children/young people as they are transported to and from places under the care of the YWCA staff and volunteers, the safety of children/young people participating in YWCA events, and the safety of children/young people taking advantage of YWCA services. Potential risk factors may include weather and natural disasters, possibility for abuse and exploitation, and locational hazards.

To complete a risk assessment:

1. Determine what kind of programme or activity is being assessed and what the possible risks are.
2. Determine the extent of the risks by taking into account the probability of their occurrences and their consequences.
3. Formulate strategies to reduce risks by using all available resources and monitoring the risks in programmes and activities throughout their lifecycles. Monitoring risks should include noting if the activity is still active and presents risks, if the risks are being controlled or reduced, if there are new risks, and who is in charge of monitoring the activity.
4. Outline the procedures to follow if an incident occurs.

⁴ Note: the organisation implementing an activity—this includes membership associations that implement their own programmes and activities—holds the primary responsibility for ensuring that risks to children are managed effectively. Risk assessments completed for those organisations must comply with the World YWCA's.

Enter the information into the Programme Risk Assessment log. Inactive programmes or activities can be used as a reference for future programmes or activities.

Programme	Type of programme	Possible risks	Probability of incident occurrence	Consequence of risk	Strategy to reduce risk	Action to be taken if incident occurs	Still active	Monitored by (Name and Date)
...

Monitoring and follow-up

Using the risk assessment log to identify and log risks will help prevent incidents harmful to children/young people involved in World YWCA and/or member association programmes, activities, and services. When an incident occurs during a programme, activity, or service, staff and volunteers are obligated to follow the incident reporting protocol outlined in Section 7 of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. The name of the person/s reporting the incident must be documented.

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