

June 2023

Child Safeguarding | Policy

POLICY OWNER:	Legal Department
POLICY APPROVED BY:	President & COO, Office of the Chief Operating Officer
POLICY CONTACT:	Contracts and Document Control Lead, contracts@water.org

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I. Policy Overview

Policy Statement

This policy establishes that Water.org is committed to conducting its activities and operations in a manner that is safe for the children it serves and to helping protect the children with whom Water.org is in contact.

Within this policy, child safeguarding shall be interpreted as the act of making Water.org safe for children. It involves our collective and individual responsibility and preventative actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of or actual harm by Water.org's representatives. Safeguarding is conducted by developing and implementing a policy and set of practices to ensure all organizational functioning prioritizes each child's safety.

Purpose

Representatives of Water.org are explicitly prohibited from engaging in any activity that may result in any kind of child abuse. Within this policy, child abuse means anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.

Representatives of Water.org are expected to create and proactively maintain an environment that aims to prevent and deter any actions and omissions, whether deliberate or inadvertent, that place children at risk of any kind of child abuse.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Water.org's representatives, including employees, consultants, interns, volunteers, Board members, partners and others who work with Water.org.

This policy was created to ensure compliance with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation, or international standards, whichever affords greater protection, and with U.S. law. Where the guidance in this policy conflicts with any applicable laws or regulations, the higher standard must be observed at all times.

Governance

The **Legal Department** is the owner of this policy and is responsible for administering, reviewing, and making recommendations for updates or changes to this policy in alignment with business needs.

Violations

Any individual under the age of 18 is a child and is “underage,” regardless of the legal age of consent of the jurisdiction or country in which s/he lives and/or in which the offense occurs.

Sexual activity with a child with or without their consent will be treated as a serious infraction and will result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination, and the pursuit of any other available legal remedy.

Disciplinary, legal, or other applicable actions in response to any violation of this policy will be taken against any individual who has committed a child safeguarding violation and/or anyone who knew of such a violation and failed to act or report.

II. Policy

This policy establishes that Water.org is committed to conducting its activities and operations in a manner that is safe for the children it serves and to helping protect the children with whom Water.org is in contact.

This policy is relevant to and applies to all Water.org's representatives, including all employees, consultants, interns, volunteers, Board members, partners, and others who work for or with Water.org.

1. Management Commitment

Water.org's Management is committed to taking all appropriate corrective actions.

Disciplinary, legal, or other applicable actions in response to any violation of this policy will be taken against any individual who has committed a child safeguarding violation and/or anyone who knew of such a violation and failed to act or report.

Within this policy, child safeguarding shall be interpreted as the act of making Water.org safe for children. It involves our collective and individual responsibility and preventative actions to ensure that all children are protected from deliberate or unintentional acts that lead to the risk of or actual harm by Water.org's representatives. Safeguarding is conducted by developing and implementing a set of policies, procedures, and practices to ensure all organizational functioning prioritizes each child's safety.

2. Risk Assessments and Prohibited Conduct

All partners must conduct risk assessments for all programming and activities involving children or those having a direct impact on children.

Where possible and practical, the “Two-Adult Rule,” wherein two or more adults supervise all activities where children are involved and are present at all times, shall be followed. Where not possible, staff will be required to proactively plan and implement steps to mitigate the risk of not having two adults present.

Representatives must never:

- i. act in ways that may be abusive or place children at risk of abuse;
- ii. hit, physically assault, or physically abuse children or threaten to do so;
- iii. engage in behaviors that are physically inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- iv. engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years irrespective of the age of majority/consent or local custom;
- v. exchange personal contact information or ask for children's personal information;
- vi. develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- vii. use language, make suggestions, or offer advice to children which is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive;
- viii. do things for participating children of a personal nature that they can do themselves (e.g., toileting, dressing, feeding, washing, etc.);
- ix. participate in behavior of children which is unsafe or illegal;
- x. act in ways that shame; humiliate; belittle; or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse;
- xi. expose children to inappropriate images, films, music, and websites including mature content, indecent images (pornography) and violence.

The above list is not exhaustive.

III. Responsibilities

This policy is relevant to and applies to all Water.org's representatives, including all employees, consultants, interns, volunteers, Board members, partners, and others who work for or with Water.org.

IV. Additional Resources

Contact for Support

Please contact the Legal department if you have questions or need clarification regarding this policy.