

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ITF upholds and supports the highest standards of conduct with regard to the safeguarding of children and does not engage in or support any activity that involves the maltreatment of children.
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## 1. THIS POLICY DRAWS UPON:

- Our existing (undated) Child Protection Policy
- Our existing guidelines on Child Labour (for SCF applicants)
- DEC South Yorkshire Child Protection Policy 2007
- DEC South Yorkshire Safeguarding Policy Statement 2016
- Trees for Cities Safeguarding Children Policy 2016
- Charity Commission England and Wales: Safeguarding Children and Young People 2014
- Setting the Standard: A Common Approach to Child Protection for International NGOs 2003.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

As an environmental organisation that works directly or indirectly with children, International Tree Foundation is committed to promote the welfare of children who are involved with our projects and to safeguard them from harm.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ITF upholds and supports the highest standards of conduct with regard to the safeguarding of children and does not engage in or support any activity that involves the maltreatment of children.

## 4. SCOPE

ITF's child protection policy will apply to all members, trustees, staff, volunteers, partners, grantees and contractors.

ITF requires a child protection policy because:

- a) ITF supports tree planting and environmental projects which often engage children in practical and educational activities;
  - b) ITF supports specific environmental education programmes such as Tree Power which engage children through their schools;
- ITF works in countries where poverty may increase the vulnerability of children to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. From time to time, ITF may organise or take part in other activities involving children.

ITF staff, contractors and volunteers may work directly or indirectly with children in any of the above settings. For example they may meet children, join in their activities, and take photographs or videos, while carrying out monitoring visits to projects that ITF supports. In programmes such as Tree Power, ITF staff, contractors and volunteers may directly teach,

train or organise activities for children. ITF has a responsibility to ensure that this is done in a way that supports children's welfare and keeps them safe.

## 5. DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES:

*Definition of children:* Children are people under the age of 18. Children may be unable to take care of themselves and unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation by other people.

*Definition of Safeguarding:* Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

*Definition of abuse:* Abuse is maltreatment that can cause damage to a person. It can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse and child maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."

*Definition of inappropriate behaviour:* Inappropriate behaviour is not identified as abuse but contravenes the code of conduct in this policy and /or could be interpreted as grooming (preparing a child for abuse).

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT

Principles derived from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, Article 19) include a duty of care for NGOs to the children with whom they work and with whom their representatives work. We and our partners have a responsibility to meet minimum standards of protection for children in our programmes. These standards include specifically:

- the welfare of the child is paramount;
- no child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access services which meet their particular needs;

- all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs;
- children, parents and partner organisations will be informed of the policy and procedures as appropriate.

All concerns, and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by trustees, staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately – e.g. through a referral to children’s social care services or in emergencies, the police. ITF will:

- comply with the UK government inter-agency statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children;
- review this Policy, and have it approved and endorsed by the Trustees, annually or when legislation changes;
- identify ITF projects that engage or may engage children in their activities;
- ask grantees to identify and describe any involvement of children in their projects;
- provide clear guidance on child labour for all grantees;
- not provide grants to projects that intend to engage children as child labour;
- work with and through partner institutions such as schools and YMCAs that are legally registered to work with children;
- in case of doubt, confirm the legal status of partner institutions with appropriate national agencies such as the Ministry of Education;
- where grantees such as Community Based Organisations are not legally registered as educational organisations, require that they engage children only through registered educational organisations whose staff will be present at all times with the children;
- report any instance of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour towards children by ITF trustees, staff, volunteers, partners, grantees and contractors to the police or appropriate authority including the Charity Commission – such behaviour will result in dismissal and disciplinary action;
- not provide favourable references for a person who is found to have committed such acts.

In 2017 ITF will review its policy and procedure with regard to the privacy and protection of children online, and our use of photographs and videos of children. In the meantime, we will inform our partners and staff that they must obtain consent from the school or parent/guardian before sending any photograph or video of children, and we will not publish such photographs or videos without confirmation of consent.

The Safeguarding Officer

The Programmes Manager (Paul Laird) will have responsibility for ensuring that ITF's Child Protection Policies and Procedures are adhered to. In his absence the Finance and Facilities Manager (Marika Haseldine) will deputise.

Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer:

- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected
- To support, and where possible secure, the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.

Support for those who report abuse:

All those reporting abuse or expressing concern (whether they are staff, a volunteer, trainee or member of the general public) should be reassured that:

- they will be taken seriously;
- their comments will be treated confidentially with the exception of passing on reports to the appropriate authorities.

The child has the right:

- to be made aware of this policy
- to have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously
- to receive fair and respectful treatment throughout
- to be involved in any process as appropriate
- to receive information about the outcome.

Recruitment and induction of Staff:

- All UK-based staff, contractors and volunteers who may work unsupervised with children in their role, must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check carried out before they begin work with International Tree Foundation.
- All staff based in other countries who may work unsupervised with children in their role will adhere to equivalent national legislation.
- Any person with convictions that may signify a potential hazard to children will not be allowed to work or work unsupervised.
- All staff and volunteers will receive a copy of this policy as soon as they start work at International Tree Foundation.

- All staff and volunteer staff must read the policy and reflect on any potential specific interaction with children through working with ITF. They must agree with their Line Manager the specific responsibilities and actions they will take in line with the policy to ensure the safeguarding of children.