



Wide Horizons'

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

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Safeguarding Officer: Aung Than (widehorizons.safeguarding@gmail.com)

I. Goal and Guiding Principles of Policy

Wide Horizons' Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy (CPP) aims to demonstrate the commitment of the organization to ensuring the safety, dignity and well-being of all children and vulnerable adults who are directly or indirectly served by Wide Horizons. Wide Horizons (WH) considers it a duty and priority to protect the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Therefore, WH treats children and vulnerable adults with respect regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status in line with the UN's Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). Wide Horizons' Child Protection Policy follows the CRC and the policies set forth by Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force (PSEA). Wide Horizons adopts a **zero tolerance approach to child abuse, exploitation and child pornography** (see Appendix 1 for definitions).

Wide Horizons believes it is our responsibility to inform and educate all personnel and individuals affiliated with the organization about our policies and commitments to safeguarding. This policy applies to all Wide Horizons staff (paid and unpaid, including all Work Placement Students and volunteers), individually contracted advisors/consultants to Wide Horizons and seconded staff. The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy shall be provided to and acknowledged by all representatives listed prior.

For the purpose of this policy, "children" shall mean anyone under the age of 18 years.

Wide Horizons will review its safeguarding & child protection policy on a yearly basis to ensure relevancy.

II. Background

Rationale

Wide Horizons has developed this policy based on both the legal and moral responsibility of the organization to protect the children and vulnerable adults with whom WH are in contact. The protection of children and youth is one of four themes throughout the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC), which entered into force as international law

on 2 September 1990. In all of its work, Wide Horizons sustains a focus on the rights of children that is in line with the UN-CRC, which serves to guide Wide Horizons' policy on safeguarding and child protection.

There are five guiding principles all staff must recognize as part of this policy:

1. A zero tolerance of abuse and exploitation of child or vulnerable adults.
2. An understanding that abuse of child and vulnerable adults is never acceptable
3. Recognizing unintentional abuse of child and vulnerable adults can happen due to organizational negligence
4. A commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults with/for whom WH work
5. Believing it is a shared and collective responsibility of all adults to prevent child and vulnerable adults exploitation and abuse

In addition to the five guiding principles, Wide Horizons will follow the tools and practices set forth by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for direction on responding and reporting.

Policy Implementation

The Wide Horizons Program Manager is accountable for ensuring that this policy and any investigation of suspected abuse remains in accordance with national laws, including reporting to and cooperating with relevant law enforcement authorities when abuse may result in criminal charges against the accused. In case the Program Manager is involved in the abuse; then a delegate from the Senior Management Team is empowered to establish a committee to investigate the case. The Senior Management Team will have the overall responsibility to oversee and ensure the policy's implementation.

III. Policy Elements

1. Personnel Recruitment

- Wide Horizons will not allow any person presenting an unacceptable risk to children's and vulnerable adults' safety or well-being to work with the organization.
- Wide Horizons ensures that for all potential personnel, a personal character reference check is obtained from at least two people who are not related to the job applicant.
- All Wide Horizons potential candidates will be expected to sign a personal Declaration of Criminal Convictions (See Annex 3).
- All hired candidates and existing representatives of Wide Horizons will be made fully aware of this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and will acknowledge and sign prior to commencement of work.
- All job advertisements will include a statement declaring that Wide Horizons has a safeguarding and child protection policy in place in order to demonstrate the organization's strong commitment to safeguarding issues. Each job advertisement will include the following statement: *"All candidates will be expected to comply with Wide Horizons' Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy."*

2. Education and Training

- All Wide Horizons full time employees will attend training that is organized for staff on issues on safeguarding.
- Wide Horizons will have an organizational atmosphere that encourages opportunities to question and learn about safeguarding issues.

3. Management

- Wide Horizons staff will fully respect the dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults.
- Child and vulnerable adults protection issues will be considered in staff evaluation and appraisals.
- The Wide Horizons Senior Management Team will reflect core principles and values of Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection, and uphold a professional approach and demonstrate awareness of abuse.
- Wide Horizons will take measures to ensure that all information regarding stakeholders health, family background and personal history remains confidential and can only be accessed by authorized Wide Horizons personnel.

4. Behavior Code of Conduct for Child Protection

All Wide Horizons personnel will abide by the Behavior Code of Conduct for Safeguarding.

While implementing WH projects and activities, staff will:

- Not use language or behavior towards children and vulnerable adults that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, emotionally, mentally harmful, or culturally inappropriate
- Not engage children and vulnerable adults in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child, the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws
- Where possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children and vulnerable adults
- Receive permission from parents, guardians or teachers/Program Managers if it is necessary to accompany children and vulnerable adults away from project sites (see Annex 4 for sample permission form).
- Use communication media such as computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras appropriately.
- Never use physical punishment on children or vulnerable adults.
- Do not employ children for domestic or other labor which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage.
- Comply with all relevant local labor laws in relation to child labor.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.

5. Communications

- Wide Horizons will follow procedures to ensure that permission is requested prior to film or photos being taken by obtaining a signed consent form (see Annex 5) from guardians/parents of concerned children. If guardians are not present, consent forms should be signed by school Program Managers or teachers.

- Wide Horizons will ensure that information and images of children will never be used in a way that lessens the child's safety or dignity. All Wide Horizons publications and websites that include images or text related to children will be presented in a respectful manner.
- Wide Horizons will ensure that images and text of children are honest and balanced representations of the context and the facts and will not be manipulated or sensationalized.
- All Wide Horizons staff who are involved with any communications about children will be aware of and follow communications procedures.

6. Reporting and Reaction Protocol

- Employees of Wide Horizons or its partners¹ have an obligation to report any incidents, comments, or safeguarding concern experienced to **Safeguarding Officer** (widehorizons.safeguarding@gmail.com) or a member of the Senior Management Team for a thorough investigation. A standardized reporting format (see Annex 6) should be filled out by any staff who has knowledge that a child's safety might be in danger. Failure to report incidents will be also investigated for potential misconduct which could lead to disciplinary action if evidence of dereliction of duty is identified.
- Action will be taken by the **Safeguarding Officer** and/or the Senior Management Team to ensure the individuals are safe as a priority and then to investigate the matter.
- The **Safeguarding Officer** and/or Senior Management Team may seek legal advice, the advice of the Social Services or Police in deciding whether a formal referral to the authorities is necessary. If it is decided that external reporting should *not* take place then there must be a clear rationale for that decision which should be recorded. The decision not to report in such circumstances should be unanimously approved by the relevant management personnel. The process leading to the decision making should be well documented and all factors and responses kept on file.
- Wide Horizons will also consider involving local authorities to ensure the protection of children and criminal prosecution where this is appropriate.

7. Consequences of Misconduct

1. Wide Horizons' Program Manager will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending the investigation. Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Program Manager will assess all individual cases to decide whether a staff member or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be carried out sensitively.
2. If it is determined that anyone associated with Wide Horizons violates the Safeguarding Policy, the organization will take immediate disciplinary action which could include dismissal from duties, transference to other duties, reporting to local authorities and/or dismissal from the organization.

¹ This refers to organization who have a formal partnership agreement with Wide Horizons, such as a sub-grant agreement

3. Should an employee of a partner organization² present a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children or vulnerable adults, Wide Horizons will assess the agreement held between Wide Horizons and the partner. Depending on the outcome, the contract may be terminated, and funding withdrawn.

III. Changes to this document

Authority to alter the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Guidelines rests with the **Program Manager** (widehorizons.myanmar@gmail.com) and final approval will be sought from the Senior Management Team. All team members are encouraged to provide input and suggestions but may not alter or change any part of the document without agreement.

The Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed every year and updated as required, and the availability of updated versions will be communicated to staff. It is the individual employee's responsibility to ensure they are complying with the most current version of the policy.

² This refers to organizations which have a formal partnership agreement with Wide Horizons, such as a subgrant agreement

Annex 1: Definitions

According to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990), a **child** is considered to be a person under the age of 18 **EVEN** if the age of consent in the country may be younger.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults from both *intentional* and *unintentional* harm³. In this current context, it applies particularly to the duty of Wide Horizons - and individuals associated with the organization - towards children and vulnerable adults.

What is Child Abuse?

According to the World Health Organization, “Child Abuse” or “maltreatment” constitutes “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.”⁵ For this policy, we have adapted this definition to also apply to vulnerable adults.

- **Physical Abuse:** This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child who they are looking after.
- **Emotional Abuse:** This is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and long lasting effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It can also involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adult, or causing children or vulnerable adult frequently to feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual Abuse:** This involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of what is happening or gives consent. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or vulnerable adult in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or vulnerable adult to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect:** This is the persistent failure to meet the child’s or vulnerable adult’s basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of

³ Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit: How to Create a Child-Safe Organization, Child Hope UK

⁵The WHO definition of Child Abuse as defined by the Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention WHO – 1999.

their physical or cognitive development. For example, inadequate care and supervision which leaves a child or vulnerable adult in a dangerous situation where they could be harmed (but only where this can be avoided).

- Other types of abuse commonly recognized, such as commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, are complex manifestations of a combination of the above four categories. It is important to highlight that bullying is also a form of abuse as it is an act of aggressive behavior in order to intentionally hurt another person or persons, mentally, physically and/or sexually. Abuse can take place in many forms and anywhere, that is, in the family, community or on the Internet. Abuse is also manifesting itself in digital and augmented technologies such as smartphones. This can be virtual or real and can take many forms including sexual harassment and child pornography. It should be remembered that although WH commonly think of adults as those who abuse children, children can also be the perpetrators.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality⁴ means not sharing information about people without their knowledge and agreement, and ensuring that written and electronic information cannot be accessed or read by people who have no reason to see it. For the purpose of the policy confidentiality is important because:

- In case information is not kept confidential, a person may not trust the support system and be less confident or willing to report or share their observations and experiences.
- A person may not feel valued or able to keep their self-esteem if their private details are shared with others.
- A person's safety may be put at risk if details of their situation and habits are shared publicly.

⁴ Adapted from the website <http://www.qcf-healthandsocialcare-ansWHrs.com/2011/01/qcf-unit-1-5-1-explainthe-term-confidentiality/>

Annex 2: Statement of Commitment



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO WIDE HORIZONS'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY⁵

I, _____, have read and understood the standards and guidelines outlined in this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing child and vulnerable adult protection policies and practice while working with Wide Horizons. I understand that if a complaint is brought regarding the abuse of children or vulnerable adult of any kind while engaged in Wide Horizons activities, the allegation will be thoroughly investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities.

Print Name _____

Job Title _____

Signature _____

Date _____

⁵ Adapted from Child Protection Policies and Procedures Toolkit: How to Create a Child-Safe Organization, Child Hope UK, Appendix 17

Annex 3:



Declaration of Criminal Convictions

Declaration of Criminal Convictions

Do you have a prosecution pending or have you ever been convicted, bound over or cautioned by the police or received a formal reprimand or final warning for any offenses including road traffic offenses? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, please provide details, including those prosecutions or convictions considered 'spent', and declare any previous investigations or allegations made against you. These will be kept confidential by the Program Manager at Wide Horizons, who will assess whether they pose any risk or not in relation to child protection.

"I declare that the information I have given is complete and true and understand that knowingly to make a false statement may result in termination of any agreement held between myself and Wide Horizons."

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Annex 4:



Sample permission letter for taking children away from project sites

Travel Consent Form

Parent/Guardian* Consent

I am the parent or guardian of *(insert name of the child or vulnerable adult)*

_____.

I give consent for his/her travel with *(insert full name of the accompanying adult)* _____

_____ to *(insert place/location)* _____

_____ on the following date(s): _____

I confirm that I understand the above, and voluntarily sign this consent form.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

*if the activity is school related and it is not possible for the parent/guardian to sign this form, a teacher or school Program Manager could do so instead

Annex 4:



Communications Consent form

CONSENT FORM

I give Wide Horizons the right to use my image/photo and information that I provide in their public websites, publications and other materials.

I acknowledge that I will not receive payment from Wide Horizons relegated to the use of this image and information.

I confirm that I understand the above, and voluntarily sign this Consent Form.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Annex 5:



Communications Consent form

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

I am the parent or guardian of _____. I give consent for his/her image and any information provided to be used by Wide Horizons.

I acknowledge that I will not receive payment from Wide Horizons relegated to the use of this image and information.

I confirm that I understand the above, and voluntarily sign this Consent Form.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Annex 6:



Standard Report Format⁷ **CONFIDENTIAL**

If you have knowledge that a child or vulnerable adult's safety might be in danger, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. Please note that safeguarding concerns must be reported directly to the Program Manager (WH) or a Member of the Senior Management Team at Wide Horizons immediately (preferably within the same working day). You may wish to complete this form before contacting the PM/SMT or you may wish to complete the report after contacting the PM/SMT. This report is to be used as a tool to develop the most unbiased report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It should only be sent to the designated Focal Point and/or Program Manager. It will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence.

1. About You

Your Name:

Your Job Title:

Organization:

Your relationship with the child:

Contact details (Tel/email):

2. About the Child

Child's Name:

Child's Gender:

Child's age:

Child's address:

Child's guardians:

3. About your Concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected?

Is this concern based on first-hand information or information divulged to you by someone else?

(If so, who?)

Did the child disclose abuse to you?

Date of the alleged incident:

Time of the alleged incident:

Location of the alleged incident:

Name of the alleged perpetrator:

Job Title:

Organization:

Nature of the allegation:

Your personal observations (visible injuries, child's emotional state, etc.)

(N.B. Make a clear distinction between what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay – use extra paper if needed)

Exactly what the child or other source said to you [if relevant] and how you responded to him or her/

[Do not lead the child, record actual details]

Any other information not previously covered

Were there any other children/people involved in the alleged incident?

Action Taken

Signed: _____

Date: _____