

Women Deliver Child and Young Person Safeguarding Policy

Policy Rationale

Women Deliver¹ is a global champion for gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women. Women Deliver advocates for the meaningful engagement of young people through its Young Leaders Program, which provides young advocates with the training and resources necessary to extend their influence and actively shape the policies that affect their lives.

Throughout this work, Women Deliver is dedicated to ensuring that children and young people are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation, and other forms of harm. Women Deliver understands it has a proactive obligation to develop and implement gender-responsive programs that promote children and young peoples' health, safety, and wellbeing. Furthermore, Women Deliver believes that adults in positions of power and relationships of trust towards children and young people must exercise the highest levels of integrity, due diligence, and risk prevention.

To support and activate these commitments, Women Deliver has created a safeguarding policy to provide guidance for its interactions with children and young people. This policy is aligned with Article 19 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which asserts children's right to protection from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse." It also reflects every individual's right to equality, dignity, and security as set out in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

Statement of Principles

The implementation of this policy is guided by the following principles:

- "Do No Harm" constitutes the highest standard of Women Deliver's commitment to the young people with whom it comes into contact. No child or young person should suffer intentional or unintentional abuse, neglect, or exploitation as a result of their engagement, association or contact with Women Deliver. This includes harm that may arise through their participation in Women Deliver-related programs, events, communications, as part of a fundraising or social media campaign, or in an advisory role.
- Children and young people have an equal right to protection irrespective of age, sex, race, color, religion, nationality, ethnicity, language, religious or political beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, medical history, disability, socio-economic status, class, or any other aspect of their background or identity.
- Girls, boys, young women, and young men encounter different risks related to their physical, mental, and emotional safety. These risks may vary due to identity-based, situational, or other factors. When these factors intersect, it can amplify a child or young person's vulnerability to harm or risk of harm. Women Deliver's approach to safeguarding recognizes and responds to the different nature and level of risk that arises from these factors.

¹ Women Deliver is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in the United States.

- Children and young people should be provided with meaningful, appropriate opportunities to take an active role in policies, activities, and decisions that involve and pertain to them. In accordance with their age and level of maturity, children and young people will be supported by Women Deliver to understand this policy, the essence of safeguarding and how to exercise their rights to protection. Women Deliver will engage the children and young people it works with (for example, through the Women Deliver Young Leaders Program) to continually develop its safeguarding standards and this policy in order to best address their needs.
- Effective safeguarding requires consistent application of risk prevention measures and stringent action against any individual who commits an act of abuse towards a child or young person. Safeguarding standards must be continuously reviewed to address evolving needs.
- Women Deliver's safeguarding approach is mainstreamed throughout all aspects of operations, programs, projects, events, communications, and partnerships, and applies to all locations where Women Deliver activities occur.

Definitions

- **Child (or children):** Any person under 18 years of age, as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Young person (or young people):** Any person between the ages of 18 and 29.
- **Abuse:** A range of behavior resulting in actual or potential harm to a child or young person's health, wellbeing, survival, development or dignity. It includes any act or failure to act which causes, or presents an imminent risk of, death or serious harm. Abuse may be physical, emotional, or sexual:
 - o **Physical abuse:** The deliberate use of physical force that causes actual or likely physical injury or suffering (which may not necessarily be visible). Physical abuse may include shaking, punching, choking, biting, kicking, burning, hitting, throwing, poisoning, or burning. Such acts constitute abuse regardless of whether they are meant to cause injury.
 - o **Emotional abuse:** Acts or omissions that cause injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of a child or young person. It may include bullying, harassing, insulting, intentionally humiliating, inappropriately controlling or criticizing, intentionally degrading, shaming, or belittling, and any other activities that are intended to make a child or young person feel isolated, diminished, or embarrassed.
 - o **Sexual abuse:** An actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. This includes forcing, coercing, or enticing a child or young person to take part in any manner of sexual acts, such as penetration, rape, oral sex, indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child or young person, or showing a child or young person pornography. All forms of sexual violence, including incest, early and forced marriage, forced prostitution, and sexual slavery, constitute sexual abuse.

- **Neglect:** A persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person’s health, wellbeing, survival, development, or dignity. It includes acting in ways that fail to protect a child or young person from danger or that may put a child or young person at increased risk for exploitation or abuse.
- **Exploitation:** Any situation whereby an abuser takes advantage of the unequal power and/or economic status of a child or young person for profit, labor, sexual gratification, or another type of personal or financial gain.
- **Harm:** A detrimental effect on a child or young person’s physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by abuse, neglect or exploitation, whether intended or unintended.
- **Women Deliver representatives:** Women Deliver staff (full-time or part-time) and any other individual employed in any capacity by Women Deliver, interns, consultants, contractors, volunteers, partners, Board members, Young Leaders Program participants, Young Leaders Program alumni, and advisory board members.

Scope of Applicability

This policy applies to all Women Deliver representatives (see definition). It is also the standard of conduct for visitors to Women Deliver programs or events that involve children and young people, including – but not limited to - photographers, filmmakers, journalists, researchers, current donors, and prospective donors. Young Leaders Program participants and alumni are both protected by, and required to comply with, this policy as a condition of their participation in the Young Leaders Program and any other Women Deliver programs, activities, events, or opportunities.

Policy Implementation

In order to ensure compliance with this policy, Women Deliver administers the following processes and procedures for relevant areas of risk:

- **Hiring and Personnel Management**
 - o Women Deliver vets applicants for full-time staff, part-time staff, intern, consultant, contractor, volunteer, or Board member positions to ensure that representatives who interact with children and young people have the necessary competencies and skills. As part of the hiring process, Women Deliver applicants undergo a background check (including criminal) and are required to submit the names of two references, who are asked to provide their view on the applicant’s suitability to work with children and young people.
 - o Upon hire or other engagement, Women Deliver representatives receive information, training and orientation on this policy, as appropriate, including the type of conduct it requires and their responsibilities for reporting violations. Women Deliver representatives acknowledge that they understand this policy, which is included in the Personnel Policy Handbook, and agree to comply with it as a condition of their employment.

- Where appropriate and when they will come in direct contact with children and young people, Women Deliver informs visitors of the requirements of this policy. At least one Women Deliver representative must always be present to supervise interaction between program visitors and children under the age of 18.

- **Media and Communications Guidelines**

- Interviews, recordings, images, and videos of children and young people are only taken after evaluating their potential impact on the subject's health, wellbeing, safety, development, and dignity. This includes the impact of publicly sharing their likeness, voice, story or identity, as well as the impact that the act of interviewing, photographing, filming, or recording may have on a child or young person, as such experiences can sometimes be re-traumatizing or stigmatizing.
- Communications and media content should depict children and young people using active, positive imagery and language that demonstrate their agency and dignity. Materials should never stigmatize any aspect of a child or young person's identity, background or experience, or use negative imagery or language that reinforces bias or discrimination.
- Women Deliver secures written and verbal consent from the subjects of any interviews, recordings, images and videos for the purpose of publishing, reproduction, exhibition, broadcast, and advertising. For subjects under 18 years old, Women Deliver secures written consent from a parent or guardian on the child's behalf. Women Deliver representatives fully explain the purpose of the interview, filming, photographing, or recording and its intended use prior to seeking consent. Subjects have the right to decline the use of their name and/or likeness for whatever reason.
- Women Deliver never publicly shares the name, visual likeness, or identifying details of children who are especially vulnerable, including survivors of sexual violence, refugees, asylum-seekers, and those under 18 years old who do not have a parent or guardian to provide consent.
- When facilitating a child or young person's participation in an external media opportunity, Women Deliver informs the relevant journalists, reporters, or media representatives of these guidelines. For children under the age of 18, Women Deliver obtains consent from a parent or guardian and supervises interactions between the media representative and child.

- **Confidentiality**

- Women Deliver takes children and young people's privacy and confidentiality very seriously. Women Deliver does not disclose a young person's name or contact information without their explicit permission, or without a parent or guardian's permission in the case of children under 18 years of age.
- Whenever permission is not received or preference is not stated, Women Deliver utilizes a pseudonym and obscures other identifying information for the purposes of announcements and publications. All Young Leader Program participants, of

any age, may opt-in to using a pseudonym for whatever reason. For example, young people living and working in humanitarian settings may choose to use a pseudonym to protect their safety.

- Women Deliver maintains secure online systems to hold sensitive information about children and young people, such as their personal contact details. Access to these systems is never shared with external partners.

- **Parent/Guardian Provisions**

- Parents and guardians of children under the age of 18 who participate in Women Deliver programs are fully informed of this policy and Women Deliver's responsibility and commitment to protect children from harm.
- Participants in Women Deliver's programs occasionally have opportunities to participate in national, regional and global convenings, for which Women Deliver provides financial support. This includes registration fees, economy travel and accommodation costs, and visa fee support for a parent/guardian to accompany participants who are under the age of 18 or who require travel assistance.

Reporting Procedures

It is the responsibility of all Women Deliver representatives to be vigilant and alert to the best interests of the children and young people with whom it works. Women Deliver expects representatives who suspect or are aware of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to report such behavior according to the following procedure:

- If a child or young person is in imminent danger or harm's way, call 911 or the local authorities immediately.
- In all other instances, Women Deliver representatives who become aware of an incident of abuse, neglect, or exploitation towards a child or young person in a Women Deliver program or attending a Women Deliver event, whether by witnessing an incident or receiving a written or verbal report, are obliged to immediately report concerns to their supervisor, Chief Operating Officer (COO), any management representative with whom they are comfortable and who is not the subject of the incident, or the Chair of the Board of Directors. Reports may be made via phone, email, or in person.
- Failure to report incidents in accordance with this policy will be treated as a serious issue and may result in disciplinary action.
- Women Deliver representatives who make good faith reports of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation will not be retaliated against for their reporting, even if upon investigation their concerns prove unfounded. However, representatives who knowingly make false reports may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Women Deliver will ensure that the children, their parents/guardians, and young people with whom Women Deliver works are made aware of this policy, understand what constitutes a violation of it, and are aware of how to report an incident or concern. Children, their parents/guardians, and young people may report incidents or concerns to any Women Deliver representative with whom they are comfortable. Children, their

parents/guardians, and young people will not be retaliated against for their reporting, even if upon investigation their concerns prove unfounded.

Investigation and Disciplinary Action

- All reported incidents will be investigated promptly, under the direction of the COO. In the event the COO is the subject of the complaint, the Board of Directors shall designate an alternative. Complaints and actions taken will be handled as confidentially as possible under the circumstances, including the identity of the complainant. Women Deliver will maintain confidentiality of the identity of the child(ren) and/or young person(s) involved in the incident, as well as that of their parent/guardian.
- Women Deliver has discretion to take immediate action to protect the subject of the complaint. For example, if an incident occurs at a Women Deliver event, Women Deliver will take appropriate action to remove the person or persons complained of from the event/location.
- Depending on the circumstances, an investigation may be conducted by a designee of the COO. Investigators may include in-house counsel or a panel or special committee appointed by the President or Board of Directors. Outside specialists, attorneys, or consultants may also be engaged to conduct or assist with the investigation. As soon as practicable, a report will be prepared stating the results of the investigation, the determination, and recommendations for follow-up, including but not limited to disciplinary actions, further training on this Child and Young Person Safeguarding Policy, and other appropriate responsive as well as proactive undertakings.
- All Women Deliver representatives are expected to cooperate fully with an investigation of a child and young person safeguarding complaint. Cooperation includes maintaining the confidentiality of any information provided or discussed in connection with the investigation.

While balancing the need for confidentiality and personal safety, Women Deliver believes in transparency in the reporting, investigation and resolution of policy violations. Conducting an open investigative and disciplinary process is part of Women Deliver's commitment to be accountable to the children, parents/guardian, and young people who take part in its programs. Maintaining complainant and subject confidentiality, Women Deliver will, in its discretion, share the progress and results of its investigative and disciplinary action with Women Deliver representatives, parents/guardians of program participants under the age of 18, donors, and other relevant parties.

Policy Review

Women Deliver will undertake a child and young person safeguarding risk assessment and review of this policy every three years, or sooner if circumstances compel an earlier review. Recommended revisions to the policy will be sent to the Board of Directors for approval.

Records Management

Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in accordance with Women Deliver's record-keeping system.

Related Policies

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

Personnel Policy Manual

Whistleblower Protection and Anti-Relation Policy

Approval and Review Details

Policy approved by the Women Deliver Board of Directors on June 1, 2019.