

Child and Young Person Safeguarding Policy

Background

Women Deliver¹ is a global champion for gender equality and the health and rights of girls and women, and believes in the inherent rights, freedom, dignity, autonomy, and well-being of all individuals. Women Deliver advocates for the meaningful engagement of young people as co-creators and partners in program and strategy design, campaigns, advocacy initiatives and decision-making structures. A core feature of this approach is a shift in thinking and strategy from implementing programs *for* young people to amplifying their voices and working *with* young people to support their advocacy work on behalf of girls, youth, and women, in all their intersecting identities. Throughout this work, Women Deliver is dedicated to reducing the risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, and other forms of harm of which young people may be vulnerable as they research, advocate, implement, and raise funds with others working in the space. Women Deliver understands it has a proactive obligation to develop and implement policies that safeguard 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 mitigation.

To support and activate these commitments, Women Deliver maintains a safeguarding policy with respect to interactions between and among Women Deliver employees, consultants, volunteers and partners ("Stakeholders") and 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](#).

Policy Statement

Women Deliver has zero tolerance for the physical, emotional, sexual, and online abuse, exploitation, neglect, or harm of children (any person under the age of 18) or young people (any person between the ages of 18-29) in Women Deliver's programs (see definitions).

Women Deliver aims to prevent any abuse, exploitation, harm, or neglect by building safeguarding into the design of its programs and taking a "Do No Harm" approach (as defined under the Statement of Principles). Any incident that may constitute a violation of this Policy must be immediately reported to the Designated Person as per Women Deliver's Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy Implementation Guidelines accountable for all reports, or any Women Deliver Stakeholder with whom they are comfortable and who is not the subject of the incident. In response to such reports, Women Deliver will act to ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person, and support them in accessing available resources they may need. Women Deliver will then take action to respond to the report as appropriate given the severity of the report. All reports of abuse will be thoroughly investigated. Breaches of this Policy will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary procedures, termination of employment or relationship, and possible legal proceedings.

¹ Women Deliver is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in the United States. Child and Young Person Safeguarding Policy Approval/Effective Date: June 1,2019; Updated in November 2022.

This Policy applies to Women Deliver Stakeholders, children, and youth, as defined below.

Statement of Principles

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

- Ensuring the health and wellbeing of children and young people is at the center of this Policy and is the most critical principle driving the implementation of this Policy. This includes maintaining 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, as much as possible under the circumstances.
- “Do No Harm” constitutes the highest standard of Women Deliver’s commitment to the young people with whom it comes into contact through the course of Women Deliver’s work. This includes, but is not limited to, 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.
- Women Deliver Stakeholders must treat children and young people with respect, regardless of race, gender identity, language identity, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, (dis)ability, class, sexual orientation or other status. They must act professionally toward children and young people with whom they interact and follow relevant laws pertaining to working with children and young people. They should consider the risk of harm when engaging with or conducting activities with children and young people if there is any possibility a child or young person may be abused or exploited through their engagement with Women Deliver Stakeholders.
- People 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 acknowledges the different nature and level of risk that arises from these factors.
- 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. Women Deliver Stakeholders should have accessible channels for young people and those that advocate/represent them to communicate their concerns, and should seriously consider and, if possible, act on those concerns. Women Deliver will advise children and young people engaged in Women Deliver-sponsored programs of the existence of this Policy and expect their compliance with it, in an age-appropriate manner. Effective safeguarding requires consistent application of risk mitigation measures and immediate and stringent action to protect a child or young person when an incident is reported or alleged.
- Women Deliver’s safeguarding approach is included throughout all aspects of Women Deliver operations, programs, projects, events, communications, and partnerships.

Scope of Applicability

This Policy applies to all Women Deliver Stakeholders as herein defined, in all countries where Women Deliver conducts business, both during and outside regular business hours. While Women Deliver will take reasonable precautions to manage and mitigate risk, certain limitations apply in circumstances where Women Deliver has limited involvement or control over interactions. While Women Deliver does not assume responsibility in such instances, it will offer guidance and suggestions as appropriate in an effort to reduce risk of harm and improve safety.

Definitions

- **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 that causes or presents an imminent risk of death or serious harm. Such acts may constitute abuse regardless of whether they are meant to cause injury. Abuse may be emotional, online, physical, or sexual:
 - **Economic abuse:** any act that seeks to exercise control over a child or young person's economic resources, reduce a child or young person's agency over their economic wellbeing, or otherwise exploit a child or young person for economic gains.
 - **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, humiliating, inappropriately controlling or criticizing, degrading, shaming, or belittling, and any other activities that make a child or young person feel isolated, diminished, or embarrassed.
 - **Online Abuse:** Any type of abuse that happens on the internet, including through computers, tablets, and mobile phones, and takes place in any online space, including social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming, or live-streaming sites. Online violence or abuse is when an individual or group creates a hostile environment that shames, degrades, intimidates or silences individuals.²
 - **Physical abuse:** The application of force by any person to any part of the body that causes actual or likely harm, injury, or suffering (which may not necessarily be visible). Physical abuse may include shaking, punching, choking, biting, kicking, burning, hitting, throwing, poisoning, or holding under water.
 - **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 or provocative language towards a child or young person, rough-housing or engaging in conduct which involves physical contact and which is sexually suggestive in nature, or showing a child or young person pornography. All forms of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including incest, early and forced marriage, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation or cutting, and sexual slavery, constitute sexual abuse. Using sexual remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunting about a child or youth's body or sexual orientation or making

² "AGIP Virtual Spaces Safeguarding Kit For Girl And Youth Leaders," Adolescent Girls Investment Plan, Plan International, and Girls Not Brides. 2021.

invitations, requests or sexually suggestive remarks is strictly prohibited as is conduct of a sexual nature for the stimulation, gratification, profit and self-interest of a Women Deliver Stakeholder who is in a position of trust or authority of with whom the child or youth is in a relationship of dependency.

- **Children:** Any person under 18 years of age, as defined by the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The definition of a child for purposes of this Policy should not be confused with the legal definition of a child or age limits set out in other relevant laws. The fact that a young person under the age of 18 may have reached the age of sexual consent, voting age, or other age-related milestone does not alter their inherent vulnerability as a child.
- **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, and can also be caused by the child or young person to themselves (“self-harm”).³
- **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.
- **Women Deliver Stakeholders:** defined as Women Deliver staff (full-time or part-time) and any other individual engaged in Women Deliver activities, including interns, consultants, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, partners, donors, researchers, media, Board members and officers, Young Leaders Program participants, Young Leaders Program Alumni, and other youth participating in Women Deliver activities.
- **Young people:** Any person between the ages of 18-29.

Policy Review

Women Deliver will review and update this Policy at least once every three years, or more frequently should there be a significant change in context, technology or the scope of Women Deliver’s work, to be consistent with legislative, organizational, and programmatic developments.

³ Note: in cases where it is reported or otherwise discovered that a child or young person is inflicting self-harm, they will be referred to the relevant resources for support and will not be reprimanded or disciplined for such action.