



Child Protection Policy

1.0 Purpose & Scope

This policy is designed to minimize the risk to children engaged with Friends of the Earth and to staff involved in planning and conducting activities with children. This also includes protection of children from all harm and abuse, including sexual exploitation and abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

It applies to employees, board members, volunteers, interns, hosted staff, and funded organizations of Friends of the Earth. Friends of the Earth will hold our contracting parties (e.g., implementing partners, service providers, third parties) to the same standard.

2.0 Terminology

Child: A person below the age of eighteen (18) years in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Special attention should be made to children from minority groups and children with disabilities.

Child Rights: Children have the “right to life, survival and development” where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Child Protection: The prevention of and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Child Protection programming is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from all forms of violence. This includes the integration of child protection into all thematic areas of programming to enhance the protective environments for children in the community.

Safeguarding: We commit to child safeguarding: to prevent, deter, detect and respond to potential harm or abuse (physical, mental, psychological including but not limited to sexual relations) in all Friends of the Earth activities and places of work, including but not limited to conservation actions, product merchandising, social media engagement, and staff interactions with children. This also includes:

- a) protecting children from maltreatment.
- b) preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- c) ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- d) taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to other areas including:

- a) A child’s health and safety
- b) The use of reasonable force
- c) Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- d) Providing first aid
- e) Internet or online safety
- f) Data security
- g) Appropriate arrangements to ensure premises security

Child abuse: involves the abuse of children’s rights and includes all forms of violence against children: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, family violence, sexual exploitation, abduction and trafficking, including for sexual purposes, involvement of a child in online child sexual exploitation and child labor as defined below.

Physical Abuse: When a person purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. It also includes cultural practices which can alter physicality in ways that cause distress, harm and/or cause lasting health ramifications such as Female

Genital Mutilation.

Neglect: The persistent failure, where there are means, or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development is placed at risk.

Emotional Abuse: A persistent attack on a child's self-esteem. Examples include, but are not limited to name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, shaming, intimidating or isolating the child

Child Sexual Abuse: When a child is used by another child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse involves contact and non-contact activities which encompasses all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing a child to online child sexual exploitation material, or taking sexually exploitative images of children.

Family violence: Includes verbal, physical, sexual or emotional violence within the household or family, which the child witnesses, usually on a regular basis.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is targeted as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery.

Online Child Sexual Exploitation: Includes all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that have, at some stage, connection to the online environment. It includes any use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) that results in sexual exploitation or causes a child to be sexually exploited or results in or causes images or other material documenting such sexual exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed or transmitted.

Grooming: Generally, refers to behavior that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender may build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualize that relationship (for example favoring a child, isolating a child, giving excessive attention or gifts, using sexualized language or physical contact, or exposing the child to sexual concepts through online sexual exploitation material).

Online-Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse: The act of sending an electronic message to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender; or of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient who the sender believes to be under 18 years of age.

Child Labor: Often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling and recreation. In its most extreme forms, child labor involves children being enslaved, separated from their families and exposed to serious hazards and illnesses.

Child Trafficking: Relates to any role in the recruitment, transportation or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, by means of threat, force or other forms of coercion. This includes abuse of power.

Military use of Children: Where children are engaged in or exposed to military activity, including as soldiers or human shield.

Contact with Children: Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve direct (including online contact with children) or indirect contact (such as use of children's images) with children. This can be either under the position description or as a result of performing the position

such as coming into contact with children when working in communities.

Working with Children: Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid work.

3.0 Aims of this policy

Friends of the Earth is committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children. We will take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support children and recognise that each child's welfare is of paramount importance. The policy therefore aims to accomplish the following:

- To ensure a protecting culture is developed within the organisation so that children's welfare and safety is always paramount.
- To ensure all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sex orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse whilst interacting with Friends of the Earth.
- Those adults engaged in an official capacity for Friends of the Earth (employees, volunteers, interns or contractors) feel informed and supported in dealings with children, ensuring Friends of the Earth's reputation is enhanced and protected.
- To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secured, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to and that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- To raise the awareness of all Friends of the Earth representatives of the need to protect children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop a structured procedure within Friends of the Earth, which in cases of suspected abuse or neglect of responsibilities will be followed by all members of the organisation.
- To ensure that all staff working within Friends of the Earth who have substantial access to children have been subjected to due diligence, in that they are checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a central record is kept for audit purposes, adhering to data protection obligations.
- Through robust training and induction, school and youth staff and other key identified individuals at Friends of the Earth will know how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information.

4.0 Child Protection Principles

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following principles:

4.1.1 We recognize that employees, board members, volunteers, interns, hosted staff, and funded organizations of Friends of the Earth have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children, protecting children from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

4.1.2 Everyone connected to the organisation should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

4.2 Other Principles and Best Practices

Other guiding principles include:

A. Best interests of the child

In all actions concerning children and when dealing with a concern for the safety or wellbeing of a child, the best interests of the child shall be our primary consideration. Friends of the Earth believes children have the right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives; that they can make choices and decisions; that they have the right to share the power adults hold and that they have a voice to influence people and events. Decisions made about children and young people will be made as far as possible with their participation and in their best interest giving full consideration to how such decisions will affect them. There may be times when adults must make decisions for children in order to protect them from harm, but their best interest will be at the heart of those decisions at that

time. In the event this policy is breached causing harm, Friends of the Earth is committed to listening and acting according to the wishes of the child. Confidentiality may be breached through sharing information if following a risk analysis there is a requirement to do so in order to protect a child from any, or further, harm.

B. Zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation

Friends of the Earth has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation. This is enacted via robust prevention and response work, offering support to survivors and holding those responsible for harm and intolerable behaviour to account. Friends of the Earth will ensure all those associated with the delivery of our work have access to information about how to report concerns or allegations of child exploitation, abuse or other breaches of this policy and will take immediate action upon report of any suspected breach. Friends of the Earth will not knowingly engage personnel to be in direct or indirect contact with children or access communities whom we work with if they pose a risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

C. Risk management approach

Friends of the Earth has a duty of care to provide protective environments for children in all operations and activities. Friends of the Earth will act with intention and foresight to ensure child protection risks are identified, monitored and mitigated against in the assessment of its operations and partner operations-to prevent the risk of a child being abused, exploited or harmed. It is expected that child protection will be considered when planning a programme as well as during implementation.

D. Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. Friends of the Earth is committed to confidentiality in sharing sensitive information in relation to child protecting incidents reported to us. Information that identifies individuals will only be shared with due consideration to the safety of the child, witnesses or subject of complaint, or to protect the integrity of an investigation.

Without prejudice, Friends of the Earth will adhere to data protection obligations and only share information about a child with adults who have parental responsibility, or where a parent/guardian with parental responsibility has given written permission to do so, or where it is necessary in order to protect the child from harm. All Friends of the Earth representatives must be aware that Friends of the Earth has a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to protect children. All schools and youth groups and any other identified individuals at Friends of the Earth must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

5.0 Safe Children, Safe Staff – Preventive Measures

We recognise that Friends of the Earth plays a significant part in the prevention of harm and abuse to children involved in Friends of the Earth activities by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults and an ethos of protection. Friends of the Earth will endeavour to:

- Work to establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
- Friends of the Earth operates safe recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers, ensuring all necessary checks are made. This should include references working with children.
- Partners, suppliers, and service providers must contractually commit to preventing harm to children. Due diligence should be performed on these parties to uncover related risks. Where needed Friends of the Earth and reinforces their awareness and capacity for example, through specific training.
- Ensure all staff with regular contact with children in their Friends of the Earth duties are appropriately skilled, and commit to their special obligations to protect children, including allowable forms of discipline (i.e., corporal punishment is never acceptable). Both genders to present to facilitate activity or training if resources allow. Regular training should be done

thereafter.

- Ensure that all staff with contact with children in their duties understands Friends of the Earth policy on child protection.
- Friends of the Earth has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against children.
- All Friends of the Earth representatives know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse.
- All parents/carers of children engaged with Friends of the Earth are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members regarding child protection procedures.
- Third parties organizing activities for children are aware of the child protecting guidelines and procedures.
- The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, will be clearly displayed at Friends of the Earth, with a statement explaining Friends of the Earth's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse. These representatives visiting schools and youth groups must wear their ID card.
- All Friends of the Earth staff who regularly work with children should be trained on first aid skills. Medical professionals and the child's parents should be engaged as soon as possible whenever there is an immediate concern about a child's health.
- This Child Protection Policy is reviewed annually and information about child protection and good practice are shared on the Friends of the Earth web where it can be accessed by Friends of the Earth representatives, teachers, youth group leaders, parents and professional or business partners.

6.0 Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that Friends of the Earth representatives must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the reasonable minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness and should be reported to the board. Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained in the Positive Options technique.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection, disciplinary procedures and may constitute a criminal offence that needs to be referred to local law enforcement.

7.0 Photographing and videoing

There has been a lot of controversy about adults photographing and filming children and the concerns are genuine. We have taken a sensible and balanced approach.

Friends of the Earth acknowledges that most people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images.

Friends of the Earth acknowledges that identifiable images taken of children are *sensitive personal data*.

Friends of the Earth will implement the following to help protect children:

1. If a child or person appears to not want to have their photo taken; either by stating so verbally or through body language, the photograph must not be taken or if already taken, must be deleted.
2. Photographs must be in good taste and in keeping with the event taking place.
3. We do not use children's names in photograph captions. If a child is named, avoid using the photograph.
4. We do not include any personal information about the children such as email addresses, postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers on our website, social channel or in other printed publications.
5. We only use images of children who are dressed appropriately. Where a participant removes any item(s) of clothing photos must not be taken.
6. We may use photographs or footage of groups of children (to portray the world as it is) with very general labels.
7. We will use a parental permission form to obtain consent for a child to be photographed and videoed.

8. We will obtain the child's permission to use their image.
9. We will have written expectations of professional photographers who are contracted to an event. These should make clear the organisation's expectations of them in relation to child protection.
10. We will not allow photographers unsupervised access to children. We do not approve photography sessions outside the event or at a child's home.
11. We will remove any images from our channel on request. Please send an email to info@selmy.cz

Seeking consent for children and young people

Children should always be consulted about the use of their photographs. This ensures they're aware that the image is being taken and understand what the picture is going to be used for. This could be recorded on a child's permission form.

For young people under 18 get parental consent to use an image. Make sure parents and carers are aware of Friends of the Earth photography policy. Ask parents to sign a consent form for use of their child's images and keep a record.

All model release form (and its derivatives) should be kept securely. If it is in hard copy, it should be digitized and stored for reference against the imagery taken in a secure manner.

Storing images securely

Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely. Hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer and electronic images should be in a protected folder with restricted access. Images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones. Avoid using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children.

8.0 Social Networking

Images of children taken for business purposes and where their faces are clearly shown can never be posted on any social networking site without the express written permission of the child's parent or legal guardian. Such images should only ever be uploaded onto reputable and approved sites.

Friends of the Earth staff or representatives should not capture or post any other child related materials onto any social networking site that might damage the reputation of Friends of the Earth. To do so will be considered as gross misconduct and may lead to termination of employment.

Friends of the Earth representatives must not accept any friend requests from children engaged with Friends of the Earth under any circumstances. Parents are asked to inform Friends of the Earth immediately if it appears that a Friends of the Earth representative has accepted a friend request as it may be someone pretending to be associated with Friends of the Earth.

Friends of the Earth representatives who have contact with children should ensure their social networking business activity is done from a Friends of the Earth business related account and not their own personal channels.

9.0 The use of mobile phones and personal devices

Staff are not permitted to use their personal phones when delivering live Friends of the Earth activities with children except in an emergency/special circumstances agreed with the activity leader. All staff should be aware, when using personal or work phones in and around children at the Friends of the Earth offices or on Friends of the Earth business, of the need to avoid inappropriate language.

10.0 Whistleblowing

All Friends of the Earth representatives should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues, or any other behavior and misconduct as stipulated in this policy. They should contact one of the board members in such circumstances.

11.0 Allegations against staff

All Friends of the Earth representatives should take precaution not to place themselves in a

vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

We understand that a child may make an allegation against a Friends of the Earth representative. If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the Friends of the Earth representative receiving the allegation or made aware of the information, will immediately inform one of the board members. Friends of the Earth will take action against anyone, whether they are the subject of a complaint or not, who seek or carry out retaliatory action such as but not limited to harassment, intimidation, unfair disciplinary action or victimization against complainants, survivors or other witnesses. Employees who are found to do this will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Others who work with Friends of the Earth may have their relationship terminated.

Friends of the Earth has a moral and legal obligation to ensure appropriate treatment of alleged victims, accused parties and witnesses. This includes special care of child victims of misconduct or neglect, protecting against retaliation, maintaining confidentiality, respecting privacy regulations, and fair treatment in investigation and disciplinary procedures.

12.0 Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Reporting Procedures

Creating a safe working environment at Friends of the Earth is **everyone's** responsibility and failure to act on concerns or disclosures relating to child abuse and exploitation is not an option.

Friends of the Earth board members bear overall responsibility for assuring that management enforces this policy and its implementation.

Friends of the Earth board members are responsible for:

- Maintaining and providing advice on this policy.
- Monitoring adherence to this Policy (e.g., regular monitoring of processes, carrying out checks to ensure staff, suppliers and members follow required training and commitments).
- Keeping abreast of regulatory changes which may impact this or other related internal policies.
- The induction of all new employees includes awareness of the Child Protection policy
- Assures that staff who deal with children or external parties have the appropriate capacity and skills and undertake the required training.
- Promoting awareness of this policy with people they manage and ensure that all their staff and contracting parties are aware of, contractually bound by, and respect this policy.
- Have overall responsibility for identifying individuals who particularly work with children and ensuring that they receive appropriate levels of child protection training commensurate with the risk profile of their role.
- They must prioritize child protection awareness raising for themselves and their teams including volunteers, contractors, partners working with them and communities involved in Friends of the Earth programs and provide budget lines for such activities.
- Supporting and developing systems that create and maintain a safe working environment. This means beneficiaries and those working on behalf of Friends of the Earth know how Friends of the Earth expects them to behave, how they can raise complaints and concerns, and that Friends of the Earth will take action when they do.
- Ensuring child protection good practice with regard to risk management assessments of activities and implementation of corresponding mitigations to ensure child safety.

Everyone - Friends of the Earth representatives (staff & external parties contracted) have an individual responsibility to comply both with the spirit and wording of this policy and escalate issues accordingly. One of the board members should be contacted immediately under any of the following circumstances:

- A complaint is made against a Friends of the Earth representative concerning their conduct in relation to children.
- A Friends of the Earth representative observes another Friends of the Earth representative acting inappropriately towards a child or any other behaviour in contravention of this policy.
- A Friends of the Earth representative fears that their own actions have been or may be,

misconstrued.

- They become aware that a Friends of the Earth representative has downloaded or recorded confidential young person information for anything other than Friends of the Earth business for their own use or to pass to a third party.
- Failure to report to a relevant person suspicion of misconduct relating to a child is a breach of this policy and could lead to disciplinary action being taken against employees and the termination of Friends of the Earth's relationship with non-employees.

13.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated to ensure this policy is rigorous both in its approach and its application. Reviews to include:

- The level of response required in order to eliminate/minimize the level of risk and the processes, procedures and guidelines required to ensure this.
- Scrutiny of risk assessments.
- Review recruiting, management and reporting issues.
- Review of training and induction procedures.
- Ensure the staff contact list is up-to-date.
- That all staff have a full induction and are able to access this policy – staff are recommended to sign undertaking form after receiving training.

14.0 Failure to comply

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including up to summary dismissal. If you are a consultant or co-contractor, failure to comply with this policy shall constitute breach of contract and will result in immediate termination of your agreement with Friends of the Earth. In addition, such violations may lead to criminal and/or civil action being initiated against you.

This policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Protection respective regulatory body if appropriate
- as a result of any other significant change or event

This policy is approved by:

Michal Feller, Friends of the Earth



Date: 27 March 2025