



Stichting War Child  
Alliance

# **SPEAK UP! PROCEDURE**

A safe and confidential way to share any concerns!

**STICHTING WAR CHILD ALLIANCE  
AND ALL OF ITS ALLIANCE MEMBERS<sup>1</sup> (WAR CHILD) BELIEVE THAT**

**NO CHILD SHOULD BE PART OF WAR. EVER.**

And in keeping with this vision, everyone involved in our work should at all times act in accordance with Code of Conduct. This serves to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone we work for and with.

Yet you may still hear, witness or experience War Child representatives - or even the organization in general - engage in conduct that falls short of the Code of Conduct.

In that event, we invite you to speak up. Speaking up is an obligation in the moment that we sign up to work in the humanitarian sector as part of an organisation, in the mandate that we have to protect children, youth, adults and the assets of the organisation.

There are multiple channels through which you can safely and confidentially raise your concern. This helps to ensure we can fulfil our commitment and responsibility to protect the children, youth and adults we work with and serve, our staff and our assets.

This Speak Up! Procedure is applicable to anyone who wants to raise a concern about observed or suspected misconduct of War Child representatives or about any failure of the organization in general.

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1. This includes all organisations linked to the War Child Alliance, whether they have an independent legal status or are a branch office of one of the legally independent War Child organisations. Including but not limited to WCUK, WCNL, Children in Conflict (US), WC Germany, WC Sweden.

## WHO CAN SPEAK UP?

Everyone working for or on behalf of War Child must speak up if they hear, witness or experience any incidents of misconduct within the organization. And the obligation to speak up is not limited to War Child representatives - it is also on anyone with whom War Child has or has had a working relationship or anyone else who wants to raise a concern about any incidents of misconduct or failure observed or experienced within the scope of War Child's work.

## TYPE OF CONCERNS

**This Speak Up! Procedure applies to any concern regarding:**

- ✓ the conduct of an individual working for or on behalf of any of the War Child Alliance representatives<sup>2</sup>, or anyone representing a War Child Alliance member towards a project participant (child, youth or adult)
- ✓ the conduct of an individual working for or on behalf of any of the War Child Alliance, or anyone representing the War Child Alliance in any capacity which is not in line with the Global Integrity Policies: Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
- ✓ the performance of the organization in general and/or management decisions. This is defined as any act, neglect or failure of the organization in general to comply with any of its commitments or global policies and procedures or other unwanted behaviour involving social or hierarchical (systemic) power dynamics. For example, management decision or practise which conflicts with existing integrity policies and/or discriminating a certain group of people.

## HOW CAN I SPEAK UP?

War Child offers the following channels below through which you can turn to for advice when you are unsure what to do about a concern you have or feel you need support, or to speak up.

Whenever you see and/or hear any incident of misconduct or failure within the scope of War Child's work you must share this and speak up as soon as you can. Do not lose time - even if you might not have all the facts related to your concern. There is no need to further investigate the matter yourself - you are not required to gather evidence to build a case.

**Please note that you are obliged to speak up as soon as reasonably possible.**

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2. All employees, interns, volunteers, members of the management team and supervisory board, consultants, service providers, partner organizations and their (staff) members, ambassadors, accompanying family members, as well as anyone representing War Child in any capacity.

## INTERNAL CHANNELS

### A. Your Safeguarding Focal Point or Coordinator or War Child contact person (not anonymous) in your Country Office

If you are a staff member of War Child, you can speak up directly to the Safeguarding Focal Point or Coordinator in the country office. Every country office has at least one Safeguarding Focal Point or Coordinator. They can provide a completely confidential, listening ear or concrete advice on the available channels to address your concern. They are able to refer you to War Child's staff care services if required or desired.

If you are not a staff member of War Child, you can also speak up directly to your War Child contact person in country or directly contact the Global Integrity team (see link below)

Advice requested or concerns shared via these channels are not anonymous. You can also use any of the other channels outlined in this Speak Up! Procedure. If you'd like to report anonymously, you can use the War Child online case speak up channel

### B. Global Integrity Framework team experts

By email	<a href="mailto:speakup@warchild.net">speakup@warchild.net</a> <a href="https://www.warchild.net/integrity/">https://www.warchild.net/integrity/</a>
By the online case reporting channel	(Case IQ link) (possible to stay anonymous)

These channels are monitored by the Safeguarding & Integrity Team who will direct the concern to the respective global advisor expert field depending on the issue you type. The experts who deal with the case protect your identity if you wish.

## ANONYMOUS REPORTING

If you want to raise your concern through a protected online channel, you can use War Child's online case reporting channel. This system allows reporting of all the categories/issue types mentioned on page 2. Moreover, it allows anonymous reporting.

War Child makes use of an independent protected service provider for this purpose, called CaseIQ. Reports can be filed in your own language and the service is available 365 days a year. To go to the War Child Integrity Channel, please click <https://www.warchild.net/integrity/>. Our Global Advisors check this channel from Mondays up to and including Fridays during regular working hours. If you make an anonymous report, the reporting channel will not share any identifying information with War Child. However, the reporting channel allows the exchange of protected anonymous messages to follow-up the cases. Please note: it is very important to save the submitted case password and relevant case details.

**To go to the War Child SpeakUp Channel, please click**

<https://www.warchild.net/integrity/>

## **HOW WILL I BE PROTECTED IF I SPEAK UP? - WHISTLE BLOWER PROTECTION**

If you have a genuine concern and reasonably suspect that misconduct has taken place or is happening, even if it is later discovered that you are mistaken, War Child considers you a whistle-blower and commits to protecting you. As a whistle-blower you will have the following rights:

- 1.** Protection from losing your job or from suffering any form of retribution or abuse of power as a result. Retaliation or abuse of power against anyone reporting a genuine concern of misconduct through the various 'speak up' channels, or for cooperating with investigations into misconduct, is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action against the person engaging in the retaliatory acts. If you believe you are or have been subjected to retaliation or abuse of power because of speaking up, you should raise this concern through the reporting channels outlined in this Speak Up! Procedure.
- 2.** We additionally commit ourselves to protect and support children, youth and adults who have been exposed to harm or abuse because of War Child programmes or representatives by referring and/or connecting to specialised support they might need such as psychological, medical or security support. More information on this can be found in Annex B (Referral Procedure) of the Case Management Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). You can find this document via this link.
- 3.** Confidentiality and applicable personal data protection laws will always be respected, and the need-to-know principle will be implemented. Sensitive information is only to be shared with those who play a pivotal role in case handling. There may be situations where the identity of a whistle-blower may be disclosed (see under 'Can my privacy be guaranteed').
- 4.** War Child provides an anonymous channel where you can report without disclosing your identity. When you enter your concern through the online War Child Integrity Channel, you can click on this option. Know that we can still communicate with you (without knowing your identity) via a secured chat tool that you can access when you use your log-in details.
- 5.** All concerns shared via the Speak Up! channels will be dealt with in accordance with our Case Management SOP. You can find this document via this link.

## **I MADE A REPORT - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

### **REPORTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF A WAR CHILD REPRESENTATIVE**

Once you have submitted a report through your preferred safe reporting channel, we will handle your concern in accordance with our elaborate standard operating procedures for case management (Case Management SOP). Here you can find the case management principles and all the steps in the process, including composition of the complaint's committees. You can find them via this link.

You will normally receive a written acknowledgement of receipt within three working days and, if/when possible, you will be kept up to date about the progress of your report.

If you report anonymous via the Integrity Channel, you can communicate with our Global Advisors completely confidentially and anonymously via the protected Integrity Channel by using your log in details (please save your case generated number and case password carefully so that you can exchange messages with the safeguarding and integrity team member responsible for your case).

There is a strong emphasis on maintaining confidentiality of all involved (including the person reporting the concern) and we aim for closing a case within 90 days. In exceptional cases, it may take longer than 90 days. If/when possible, parties involved will be kept up to date on progress and any extension to the timelines outlined.

For legal and privacy concerns, or to safeguard the integrity of an ongoing investigation, War Child will not always be able to provide you with the (full) details of the progress of a case or investigation, or a case outcome or actions taken. If/when possible, you will be informed of a case's progress and/or outcome.

### **REPORTS REGARDING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

If you submit a report regarding the performance of the organization, the report will be referred to the appropriate colleague within the Integrity/Safeguarding team who will follow up on it within a reasonable period considering the type and severity of the concern at hand.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF MISCONDUCT IS PROVEN?**

Any War Child representative not acting in line with the Integrity Framework policies, and/or proven to have breached any of the Integrity Policies will face disciplinary measures and/or other legal action, provided this is possible and safe from a survivor-centred approach. Where this is possible and safe to do so from a survivor-centred approach, War Child will use all legal means available to take appropriate action against confirmed Integrity Framework violations in a firm manner. This may include but is not limited to corrective control measures, disciplinary actions, suspension or termination of your contract, civil or criminal legal action (including but not limited to recover costs or damages), involvement of law enforcement agencies (including but not limited to reporting of the misconduct), pursuing asset recovery and any other action available to War Child in the respective situation. Appropriate actions, including follow-up actions and disciplinary measures, are decided upon by the Complaints Committee of the respective case, at all times taking the survivor-centred approach into account.

## CAN MY PRIVACY BE GUARANTEED?

Individuals who report incidents of misconduct entrust us with their observations and experiences. In return we respect their efforts by treating their reports with confidentiality and care, in recognition of the fact that mishandling confidential information can have a serious impact on the safety of affected individuals.

If your concern does not lead to an investigation, your report will only remain known to the individual(s) you reported to and the relevant Global Advisor(s) that dealt with your concern. The individuals handling your case will treat your report with the utmost confidentiality.

If the decision is taken that an investigation will be carried out, the content of your concern will be shared with relevant people involved in the case management (on a need-to-know basis) and – if relevant – the (external) investigators. Everyone involved will have signed confidentiality agreements and will treat your report with utmost confidentiality. Note that if you filed your report anonymously or express the wish that your identity remains known only to the Global Advisors, your name will never be shared without your explicit consent.

It should be noted that carrying out investigations of anonymous reports can be difficult.

You must take precautions to ensure confidentiality yourself by maintaining personal discretion, including not discussing the report with colleagues or anyone else.

War Child is committed to protecting the privacy of everyone involved. Any personal information obtained by War Child and via the War Child Integrity Channel will be dealt with in line with the appropriate privacy laws (including the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679) and will only be used for the purposes defined in this protocol or to comply with the law.

**Please note that in certain cases War Child may be legally obliged to disclose information to law enforcement agencies and / or donors. Regarding reports of safeguarding concerns related to children under the age of 18**, we will in principle inform the guardian(s) and, if a crime is suspected, national authorities, provided this is in the best interests of the child and does not place them at risk of further harm.

## DO I HAVE A SAY IN HOW A REPORT IS HANDLED?

One of the guiding principles in case management is the 'survivor-centred approach'. This means that responses to allegations of misconduct will be survivor-centred and based on the free and informed consent of the survivor/reporting party. In the Case Management SOP, you can find how this principle is embedded in the entire process of case management. You can find the document via [this link](#).

Survivors 18 years of age and older are considered to have the necessary development to take decisions by themselves throughout the case management process. Children under 18 years old however, even though they have full agency, the right to participate, be heard and take decisions, may also need to have a caregiver alongside them to support their decision process with their best interest at the center (reference to UNCRC) – provided this is safe and possible. This specific approach is implemented considering three important factors: a) the severity of the incident and the impact on the child, b) the best interest of the child principle and c) their age and child development stages requiring caregiver's approval and consent

## **WHAT CAN I DO IF I FEEL A COMPLAINT HAS NOT BEEN APPROPRIATELY HANDLED?**

If you believe that your concern - or a concern raised against you - has not been handled appropriately, you can initiate an appeal to dedicated members of the Supervisory Board via this email address [integrity.supervisoryboard@warchild.net](mailto:integrity.supervisoryboard@warchild.net) You can find the appeal procedure in Annex A of this Speak Up! Procedure.

## **WHAT IF THIS PROCEDURE IS MISUSED?**

Raising a concern must be done if you reasonably suspect potential misconduct. "Reasonably suspect" does not mean that you have to be right or that you have evidence. However, the suspicion raised must not be of malicious intent - and you must have an honest belief that the information provided is truthful. It is a violation of War Child's Code of Conduct to raise false claims and doing so can result in disciplinary measures. When it becomes clear that a report was created to harm, this can result in disciplinary measures against the person who made the false report.

Of course, no disciplinary measures will be taken towards staff reporting a genuine concern that after validation reveals no breaches of any of the Integrity policies.

## **DO WE HAVE ANY OBLIGATION TO REPORT TO THE DONOR FINANCING THAT SPECIFIC RELATED PROGRAMME WHERE MISCONDUCT HAPPENS?**

Donors have different regulations and policies when it comes to Integrity, Safeguarding, Fraud and Corruption. War Child agrees to comply to them in the moment of signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the respective donor. As such we do have obligations to report to them based on their regulations and policies. The programmes and partnerships Focal point is aware how to interact with the donors and will be your point of reference for any communication with them.



## ANNEX A - APPEAL PROCEDURE

### APPEAL PROCESS DESCRIPTION

Accountability, respect, and transparency are paramount to our organisation. If you are of the opinion that your concern - or a concern that was raised against you - through the Speak Up! channels was not handled satisfactory, you can file an appeal complaint using this procedure.

War Child's Integrity Committee of the Supervisory Board received authority from War Child's International Management Team to conduct all case appeals. Complaints may be filed in writing to War Child's Integrity Committee of the Supervisory Board via the following dedicated email: [integrity.supervisoryboard@warchild.net](mailto:integrity.supervisoryboard@warchild.net).

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The WCA Supervisory Board will review, provide guidance and take decisions on appeals that imply unsatisfactory statements on the previous handling of an incident. The Supervisory Board may decide to investigate any of the appeals based on the information provided and further assessment of the case. In this scope, they may seek any information directly from management/leadership or other people within the organisation. Attendance of management/leadership representatives at meetings must be possible as appropriate.

The Supervisory Board has the authority to obtain external legal or independent professional advice and expert investigators if necessary.

In case you are of the opinion that your concern was not handled satisfactory, you can also report via PARTOS (PARTOS is the Dutch membership body for organisations working in international development) by email: [klachtencommissie@partos.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@partos.nl) or the [Dutch Whistleblowers Authority](#) (Huis voor Klokkeluiders).

## ANNEX B - CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

**Allegation:** A claim or assertion that an individual has breached War Child's Code of Conduct or related policies and procedures, or committed a crime

**Child:** A person under the age of 18

**Safeguarding of Children:** Protecting children from harm perpetrated by any I/NGO representative themselves

**Concern:** A matter of interest or importance to someone

**Conduct:** The manner in which a person behaves, particularly in a specific place or situation

**Failure:** The disregard or omission of expected or required action

**Integrity framework:** a set of policies and procedures designed to uphold the safety and fundamental rights of everyone who takes part in War Child's activities around the world.

**Intimidation:** To frighten or threaten someone, usually in order to persuade them to do something that you want them to do

**Historically marginalized groups:** Some groups have been historically excluded by dominant groups. These are women, elderly and youth, LHBTQIA+ people, as well as people with disabilities, among others. Although race is a social construction, racialised groups have been among the most

marginalised communities historically. Racialisation is the very complex process through which groups come to be designated as being part of a particular “race.”

**Misconduct:** Behaviour that is in breach of War Child’s Code of Conduct and its related policies and procedures

**Report:** A formal communication of a concern made to one of the channels outlined in this procedure

**Reporter:** The person filing a report via any of the Speak Up! channels named above

**Retaliation:** Workplace retaliation happens when someone of an organisation somehow punishes an employee for engaging in legally protected activity, such as raising allegations of misconduct or cooperating in investigations relating to potential misconduct. This definition should be interpreted as broadly as possible. Examples of punishment are termination of contract, demotion, loss of pay or other benefits, or transfer to a less prestigious role within the organisation, withholding of rewards by the organisation such as a pay raise, an expected promotion or new position, or the opportunity to work on high-profile projects.

**Third party:** Anyone not a War Child staff member

**War Child Staff:** Anyone who has an employment, volunteer or internship agreement with War Child

**War Child Representative:** All employees, interns, volunteers, members of the management team and supervisory board, consultants, service providers, partner organizations and their (staff) members, ambassadors, accompanying family members, as well as anyone representing War Child in any capacity. This includes all organisations linked to the War Child Alliance, whether they have an independent legal status or are a branch office of one of the legally independent War Child organisations. Including but not limited to WCUK, WCNL, Children in Conflict (US), WC Germany, WC Sweden.

**Whistleblowing:** Whistleblowing is a common term that describes an employee or third party passing on information concerning a wrongdoing or misconduct that has been witnessed during work or at another moment or place.

**PSEAH:** Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment

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