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# Code of Conduct

for employees of and others representing  
**Stichting War Child**

## Table of contents

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 War Child's Mission Statement
- 1.2 Core Values
- 1.3 Purpose of the Code of Conduct
- 1.4 Who is bound by the Code of Conduct
- 1.5 Revision to the Code of Conduct

### 2. The Codes of Behaviour

- 2.1 General Values
- 2.2 Representation
- 2.3 Respecting laws and culture of the country
- 2.4 Child Safety
- 2.5 Abuse of position
- 2.6 Staff relations
- 2.7 Payment or acceptance of bribes and/or other official charges
- 2.8 Security policy
- 2.9 War Child premises
- 2.10 ICT and Social Media
- 2.11 Media
- 2.12 Photography
- 2.13 War Child logo
- 2.14 Confidentiality

### 3. Breaching the Code of Conduct

- 3.1 Reporting a breach of the Code of Conduct
- 3.2 Consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct

### 4. Declaration and signature

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 War Child's Mission Statement

We believe no child should be part of war. Ever.

**Children have the right to grow up in peace, free from fear and violence.**

To develop their full potential and become the person they want to be.

War Child makes a lasting impact.

By protecting children from violence and offering psychosocial support and education.

**We unleash the children's inner strength with our creative and involving approach.**

**And inspire as many people as we can to participate in our cause.**

Together we can change the future.

### 1.2 Core Values

War Child's Core Values reflect what we want to disseminate externally and, even more important, reflect the culture we feel is necessary to reach our strategic objectives. As a War Child representative it is important to be conscious on these values, act accordingly and produce work in line with them.

#### Creative

We don't mind how things are supposed to be done, we look for the way it could be done. We acknowledge the power of **creativity**, use our fantasy, instinct and wildest imagination. We **think positive**, invent our own means, are innovative, surprise people with ideas. And, while we're at it, we surprise ourselves.

#### Inspiring

We are **contagious**. Eager to share our energy, passion, absurdities, hopes and fears. We don't have to be the first, but make sure others like to follow and join us. We give them the opportunity to **participate**. Better even; we give them a reason to get **involved**. We're working hard for a better world and everybody can make a difference.

#### Impact

We want to make it happen, make it **stick** and make it tangible. We want to be sure to make the most of something. We even make the most of nothing if that's what it takes. But we always focus on the quality of our **results** and make them **visible**. To ourselves and others.

#### Open

We embrace each others differences. We are **respectful** and **accessible** to everyone who is involved, enthusiastic, or willing to contribute. We are clear in the steps we take and the choices we make. There is nothing we want to hide. Not even our mistakes. We take pride in being **personal**, authentic and truthful. Especially to our own beliefs.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

In order to meet our objectives, mission and core values Stichting War Child (hereafter called War Child) must retain its reputation as an NGO of integrity and respect. When working for War Child you represent War Child in your work and life. This Code of Conduct seeks to safeguard our standards of behaviour. The Code of Conduct is designed to help you understand how important it is to maintain professional practices and an ethical lifestyle. The Code of Conduct cannot anticipate every possible situation. If you have any concerns about how the Code should be applied in a particular situation, you should discuss this with your line manager and/or the HR Department at Head Office.

### 1.4 Who is bound by the Code of Conduct?

This code will be binding upon all those who work in or visit a War Child Programme Area (WPA) and upon all those who work at or represent War Child Head Office in Amsterdam (HO).

This is regardless of whether or not you have signed an employment contract. This means that it applies to all:

- War Child Staff, whether they are based at HO or in a WPA (expatriates);
- Partners of expatriates who have signed a partner agreement;
- Consultants and others undertaking (short-term) assignments or visits for War Child to a WPA;
- Members of the Board of Trustees;
- Interns, volunteers, instructors and consultants working for or representing War Child.

All National Staff in the WPA's is bound by the Code of Conduct for National Staff of the WPA as an annex to the employment contract.

For convenience, in this text all such persons are referred to as "staff" or "signatory". Each signatory is required to be knowledgeable about the Code of Conduct and all related policies and internal controls applicable.

### **1.5 Revision of the Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct is a living document intended to reflect our changing needs, realities and responsibilities. As the organisation grows and new issues arise, the Code will be periodically reviewed and modified to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs and realities of the organisation. This review process will be conducted on a regular base and will be led by the HR Manager.

*Any changes in the Code of Conduct will be legally binding for all existing signatories at the moment that the updated document has been communicated.*

## **2. The Codes of Behaviour**

### **2.1 General values**

War Child applies human rights values and principles through promoting participation, accountability and non-discrimination as much in its internal procedures as in its programming activities. Signatories of the Code of Conduct shall carry out their duties in accordance with these principles, with the highest standard of professional responsibility and integrity. The signatories shall at all times treat others with respect and dignity, and shall carry out their duties demonstrating commitment to equity and fairness for those with whom the organisation collaborates in the pursuit of its objectives as well as with any other people they interact with.

### **2.2 Representation**

Signatories should remember that they are representing the organisation at all times and should therefore not indulge in behaviour that may compromise the integrity or professionalism of the organisation.

No signatory will use alcohol or drugs when this has a negative impact on the quality of their work, image of the organisation or security situation.

### **2.3 Respecting laws and culture of the country**

Signatories are obliged to familiarize themselves with and respect the laws of the country in which they are working.

Signatories are required to familiarize themselves with and respect local culture, structures, beliefs, and customs, as long as these are not in contradiction with international human rights norms and humanitarian law.

### **2.4 Child Safety Policy**

War Child maintains a 'zero- tolerance to violence' policy which includes violence toward any War Child staff member, representative, partner or beneficiary of any age.

In reference to child protection, adult-child relations and peer relations the following behavior is NOT permitted by WCH:

- Racism, homophobia, sexism, and/or religious discrimination;
- Showing preferential treatment of some children to the detriment or exclusion of others;
- Shouting and bullying of children which includes using language with children or offering advice which is offensive, abusive, or threatening in any way;
- Intentionally physically or verbally intimidating children and/or preventing a child from expressing his/her opinion;
- Hitting or any form of physical abuse of children;
- Physically restraining children during program activities or at any other time unless the staff member has had appropriate training and another responsible adult is present as a witness;

- Assisting children with tasks of a personal nature which are not part of their job description and/or which the child is capable of fulfilling themselves;
- Allowing a child or young person with whom you work to stay overnight in your house and/or to sleep in the same bed;
- Spending time alone/unsupervised with a child or young person with whom you work. Wherever possible and practical, two adults should be present during workshops and other children's activities. Where this is not possible staff should seek alternatives such as the presence of adult community members and/or use of open spaces that are visible to others in the area.
- Developing physical or sexual relationships with children;
- Developing relationships of an inappropriate nature with children, which could in any way be deemed abusive or exploitative;
- Displaying general behavior which is against good practice or is potentially abusive, including behaviour by means of ICT, like mobile phone or internet;
- Due to the inherent imbalance of power between line managers and staff, or benefactors such as WCH staff and beneficiaries of any age, WCH does not permit personal relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries or line managers and staff.

All signatories have a duty to report suspected or confirmed breaches of the Child Safety Policy to the head office Child Protection Focal Point (CPFP) or designated alternate if the CPFP is unavailable. Reports must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of the breach.

In addition to this general Code of Conduct, all staff is required to have read and be knowledgeable of the War Child Safety Policy, which focuses specifically on keeping children safe.

### 2.5 Abuse of position

Signatories will not abuse their position in the organisation in any way. Abuse of power includes but is not limited to: favouritism, nepotism, corruption, all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation. Some specific instances are highlighted in the articles below:

- No signatory is permitted to have any form of sexual relation or any relation with any beneficiary (whether minor or adult) that could be deemed to be abusive by the standards of the country of assignment.
- No form of sexual harassment is tolerated.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or other benefits of any kind in return for employment and/or project participation.
- No signatory will extract or attempt to extract money or benefits of any kind in return for funding a specific (partner) organisation.
- No signatory will favor or support any beneficiaries privately without consent of the Country Director or Country Representative.

### 2.6 Staff relations

All signatories will contribute to a constructive working atmosphere by refraining from improper behaviour towards colleagues. Improper behaviour includes but is not limited to violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, mobbing or verbal abuse.

All signatories are asked to give careful consideration to entering into romantic relationships with a superior or subordinate as these, by their very nature, are unequal. In such cases, therefore a reassignment of duties may be deemed necessary by management.<sup>1</sup> In the event that the romantic relationship involves the signatory's direct line manager both individuals have a duty to discuss this with a member of senior management staff and/or the HR Manager.

Any signatory entering into a romantic relationship with another staff member or a staff member of a partner organisation or other organisation or institution that is important for War Child, is strongly encouraged to discuss this and any possible implications for the organisation/programme with their direct line manager.

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<sup>1</sup> War Child aims to foster a culture of openness among staff at both HO and WPA level so that issues that may potentially impact on programme implementation, quality of work in general and/or team relations are discussed before they become problematic.

### **2.7. Payment or acceptance of bribes and/or other official charges**

As a basic principle War Child does not condone the payment of bribes. These include, but are not limited to, illegal charges imposed for the release of goods from customs, “taxes” levied by local authorities in addition or beyond to the legal maximum, or illegal charges imposed by local authorities in exchange for mission registration, programme approval or work permits. No signatory will accept a bribe of any kind.

### **2.8 Security policy**

All signatories are aware of the security policy and its implications and will follow the local security plan/guidelines and instructions.

### **2.9 War Child premises**

All signatories must use War Child premises and assets with a sense of responsibility and in accordance with established rules. Use of those assets in such manner that may compromise War Child's credibility or security is unacceptable.

The War Child staff houses in a WPA are for War Child employees only. Permission for stays by non-War Child employees must be obtained from the Country Director or by the Deputy Head of Programmes at HO if the Country Director is requesting said permission.

### **2.10 ICT and Social Media**

Signatories are expected to handle and use War Child communication media with due care. Non-work related use of a computer and/or telephone is allowed as long as it does not interfere with the job.

Access to the internet- and email system is for work related usage only. Signatories are not allowed to visit sites, download material or sending emails with pornographic, discriminatory, (sexual) intimidating, violent or criminal content, unless visiting a site with some of the above content is absolutely necessary for the job.

War Child has several official company accounts on social media. When active on social media, we encourage our staff to make a contribution to the transparency and accessibility of War Child. As a War Child ambassador all signatories should be aware of this, even when using social media privately. Using social media, signatories should follow the guidelines in The Code of Engagement Social Media, available from the Communications Department.

### **2.11. Media**

All signatories may only contact the media on behalf of War Child or act as a spokesman after having the explicit permission of the authorized staff member. When it applies to local media in a WPA the authorised staff member is the Country Director. In all other situations, the authorised staff member is the Press Officer responsible for press relations at HO.

When dealing with the media, signatories will cooperate with the media to ensure that the general public is accurately informed about the War Child programme and the context in which the programme takes place.

When dealing with the media, signatories will make sure that the media approach and portrayal of the beneficiaries of our programmes are done in a respectful manner and in accordance with War Child's Child Safety Policy. Therefore, a briefing of the Press Officer is mandatory before speaking to media. War Child will furthermore ensure that external or internal demands for publicity will not interfere with the principle of maximizing the impact of our programmes.

### **2.12 Photography**

When taking part in or visiting War Child activities, photography should be kept to a minimum, unless the signatory had been requested or assigned to document the activity. Informed consent is required for all photographs of individual and/or small groups of children and should be granted before the photo is taken. All signatories should follow the guidelines in the Child Safety Policy and Brand Book.

### 2.13 War Child logo

When using the War Child logo, all signatories should use the standard logo in the colours red, black and white on either a white or a black background. When the name War Child evokes negative associations, signatories may use the logo with a cross over the word 'War' as an exception. In case of confusion between War Child Holland and War Child UK and/or Canada, signatories may use the logo with HOLLAND underneath the name. This version of the logo is never to be used in The Netherlands. All signatories should follow the guidelines in the Brand Book, available from the Communications Department.

### 2.14 Confidentiality

All signatories will take care to ensure that confidential information is properly protected and not disclosed to third parties. This includes any private information about children.

## 3. Breaching the Code of Conduct

### 3.1 Reporting on a breach of the Code of Conduct (CoC)

All signatories have a duty to report suspected or confirmed breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Reports should be addressed to the line manager of the breacher. If the breach took place in a WPA the report should also be addressed to the Country Director of the WPA. The line manager, and if necessary the Country Director, will discuss all violations with HR and/or the Deputy Head of Programmes at HO. Depending on the gravity of the breach, the Head of Programmes and/or Executive Director will be informed.

In the case of a breach of one of the codes concerning child safety as mentioned in article 1.3, the signatories must report to the Head Office Child Protection Focal Point (CPFP) or designated alternative if the CPFP is unavailable. These reports must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of the child safety breach. Once the CPFP or designated alternative has received the initial report, s/he has 24 hours to initiate the reporting and responding procedures.

Any signatory against whom such an allegation has been made should be removed immediately from their position and from all contact with the child/group in question until the allegation has been fully investigated and resolved. Where it is believed that the child is at serious risk of further harm the local social services department or equivalent should also be alerted. Before this decision is taken the Head of Programmes at HO must be advised of the details of the situation.

Reports should contain the following information:

- The name(s) of the individual(s) against whom the allegation is being made;
- The name of the individual making the allegation;
- What was seen and/or said;
- The date and location of the event;
- The names of any witnesses to the event. Witnesses must be informed by the report writer of their inclusion in the report.

*The anonymity of the individual(s) making the allegation(s) will be protected.*

Retaliation of any kind against any person who has reported an observed or suspected violation of the Code of Conduct in good faith is prohibited.

Intentionally or negligently making false allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct against a signatory is prohibited.

### 3.2 Consequences of breaching the Code of Conduct

For War Child employees this document is directly linked to the contract of employment. Any employee who fails to comply with the Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

For signatories that are not War Child employees, this document is directly linked to any other contract or agreement of cooperation by which they represent War Child. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct might lead to breaking the contract or agreement that exists between War Child and the signatory.

For signatories that are a member of the Board of Trustees this document is directly linked to their appointment. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct might lead to suspension and/or dismissal through a majority decision of the Board of Trustees.

Where the laws of a WPA or the Netherlands have been broken by the signatory s/he may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings. In such cases War Child will seek legal advice on the matter.

*Disciplinary action(s)*

HR at HO will advise on the nature and extent of the action to be taken. The line manager or Deputy Head of Programmes –or in severe cases the Executive Director of Head of Programmes- will decide upon the disciplinary action(s).

Where an individual unintentionally breaches the Code of Conduct and, realizing this, informs his/her line manager and the Country Director if it concerns a breach in a WPA, this will be taken into account when deciding on what, if any, disciplinary action will be taken.

## 4. Declaration and signature

***By signing this document, the undersigned declares to have read it in full and understood its intention, implications, and possible consequences for his/her behaviour as representative of War Child. Any signatory who has questions about any aspect of this Code of Conduct and its potential implications for him/her has the responsibility of discussing it with his/her manager and/or HR at HO.***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>