



**Knowledge for World
Conservation (KWC)**

Climate, Forests, and People

KNOWLEDGE FOR WORLD CONSERVATION (KWC)

SAFEGUARDING POLICY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Purpose of the Policy | 3 |
| 3. Legal and Policy Framework | 4 |
| 4. Related Policies | 4 |
| 5. Definitions | 4 |
| 6. Policy Statements and Principles | 6 |
| 7. KWC's Safeguarding Commitments | 6 |
| 8. Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment | 7 |
| 9. Code of Behaviour and Professional Conduct | 7 |
| 10. Safeguarding in Field Work, Research and Community Engagements | 7 |
| 11. Photography, Media and Data Protection | 8 |
| 12. Gross Professional Misconduct, Harassment and Bullying | 8 |
| 13. Roles and Responsibilities | 8 |
| 14. Reporting and Response Procedures | 8 |
| 15. Confidentiality and Protection from Retaliation | 9 |
| 16. Partnerships and Third Parties | 9 |
| 17. Monitoring, Learning and Capacity Building | 9 |
| 5. Approval and Review of Policy | 9 |
| 6. Adoption | 10 |

1. Introduction

This Safeguarding Policy applies to all Knowledge for World Conservation (KWC) staff including Management Staff, Board Members, volunteers, interns, consultants, contractors, service providers, partners, resource persons and any individual working on behalf of KWC, whether on a paid or voluntary basis. KWC works directly with forest-dependent communities, children, farmers, youth groups, women, persons with disabilities, wood processing factory operatives and foresters. As such, safeguarding is a core responsibility of the organisation and an integral part of our values, programmes and operations.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ✚ Protect vulnerable adults (including farmers, youth, women, elderly persons and persons with disabilities), volunteers, interns, children and wood processing factory operatives who engage with or receive services from KWC.
- ✚ Prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, bullying, neglect and all forms of harm in KWC's programmes, field activities, research, trainings and community engagements.
- ✚ Provide staff, partners and service providers with clear principles, responsibilities and procedures that guide KWC's safeguarding practice.
- ✚ Ensure that safeguarding concerns are reported, responded to and addressed promptly, confidentially and appropriately.

KWC believes that vulnerable adults and children should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote their welfare and to ensure they are protected from bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation, abuse and neglect.

3. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy is guided by and aligned with the following legal and policy instruments:

- ❖ Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992
- ❖ Ghana's Criminal Offences Act, 1960
- ❖ Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560)
- ❖ Child and Family Welfare Policy of Ghana
- ❖ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1991
- ❖ Relevant international safeguarding and humanitarian standards.

4. Related Policies

This Safeguarding Policy shall be read alongside KWC's policies and procedures on:

- ❖ Human Resource Management, recruitment, induction and training
- ❖ Code of Conduct for staff, Board members, volunteers and service providers
- ❖ Whistleblowing and complaints
- ❖ Health, safety and security
- ❖ Data protection and information management

5. Definitions

For the purpose of this Safeguarding Policy, the following definitions apply:

Child

Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years, in accordance with the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560).

Vulnerable Adult

Any person aged eighteen (18) years or above who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, abuse or exploitation due to disability, age, illness,

poverty, dependency, illiteracy, social exclusion or livelihood and environmental vulnerabilities.

Safeguarding

The responsibility and actions taken by KWC to prevent harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment and bullying of children and vulnerable adults, and to respond appropriately when concerns arise.

Sexual Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes.

Sexual Abuse

Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, including sexual harassment.

Bullying

Repeated, intentional behaviour that causes physical, emotional or psychological harm to another person.

Safeguarding Concern

Any suspicion, allegation, disclosure or observation that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The staff member responsible for overseeing safeguarding matters at KWC. This role is held by the General Manager.

Survivor

A person who has experienced abuse, exploitation, harassment or harm. KWC adopts a survivor-centred approach.

6. Policy Statements and Principles

KWC recognises that:

- ✚ The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
- ✚ All vulnerable adults and children have the right to protection regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- ✚ Some individuals are more vulnerable due to poverty, dependency, illiteracy, communication barriers or social exclusion.
- ✚ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- ✚ Working in partnership with communities and relevant agencies is essential to promoting welfare and protection.

7. KWC's Safeguarding Commitments

KWC is committed to keeping vulnerable adults and children safe by:

- ✚ Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- ✚ Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (General Manager).
- ✚ Adopting and enforcing safeguarding procedures and a Code of Conduct.
- ✚ Providing supervision, training and support to staff and partners.
- ✚ Ensuring safe recruitment and screening processes.
- ✚ Recording and storing safeguarding information securely and confidentially.
- ✚ Responding promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- ✚ Maintaining an anti-bullying and non-discriminatory working environment.
- ✚ Ensuring effective complaints and whistleblowing mechanisms.
- ✚ Providing safe environments during office work, field activities, trainings, travel and community engagements.

8. Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

KWC is committed to protecting employees, community members and stakeholders from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

- KWC shall not engage in child labour of any form.
- Sexual activity with children is strictly prohibited.
- Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of any vulnerable adult or child will not be tolerated.
- Vulnerable adults shall not be discriminated against during KWC activities.

Any employee, volunteer or contractor found culpable shall face disciplinary action and be reported to the appropriate authorities where necessary.

9. Code of Behaviour and Professional Conduct

All persons working with or on behalf of KWC shall:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Avoid situations that may place individuals at risk.
- Refrain from exchanging money, gifts or favours for personal gain.
- Use respectful and appropriate language.
- Obtain informed consent for participation and media use.
- Uphold this policy at all times.

10. Safeguarding in Field Work, Research and Community Engagements

KWC shall integrate safeguarding into all field work, research and community activities by:

- ❖ Conducting safeguarding risk assessments.
- ❖ Training field teams on safeguarding principles.
- ❖ Informing communities of reporting mechanisms.

- ❖ Minimising power imbalances.
- ❖ Applying ethical research and engagement standards.

11. Photography, Media and Data Protection

- ✚ Informed consent shall be obtained before capturing images or recordings.
- ✚ Images and data shall not expose individuals to harm or stigma.
- ✚ Safeguarding information shall be stored securely and confidentially.

12. Gross Professional Misconduct, Harassment and Bullying

KWC shall not tolerate gross professional misconduct, harassment or bullying. The workplace includes offices, field sites, trainings, meetings, travel and all KWC-related environments. KWC reserves the right to dismiss staff, terminate contracts and pursue legal action, where necessary.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

- ✚ **All staff and partners:** uphold the policy and report concerns.
- ✚ **General Manager (DSO):** receive reports and coordinate responses.
- ✚ **Executive Director:** oversee investigations and report to the Board.
- ✚ **Board of Directors:** provide oversight and handle senior-level cases.

14. Reporting and Response Procedures

- Safeguarding concerns must be reported to the General Manager immediately.
- All cases shall be treated confidentially and seriously.
- Investigations shall follow due process.

- Reports shall be documented appropriately.
- Cases involving the Executive Director shall be reported to the Board Chairman.
- Criminal matters shall be referred to appropriate authorities.

15. Confidentiality and Protection from Retaliation

KWC shall ensure confidentiality and protect whistleblowers and survivors from retaliation, intimidation or victimisation.

16. Partnerships and Third Parties

- ✚ Partners and contractors must comply with this policy.
- ✚ Safeguarding clauses shall be included in agreements.
- ✚ Partnerships may be suspended or terminated for safeguarding breaches.

17. Monitoring, Learning and Capacity Building

KWC shall:

- a. Provide regular safeguarding training.
- b. Monitor policy implementation.
- c. Learn from incidents to strengthen systems.
- d. Promote accountability and continuous improvement.

5. Approval and Review of Policy

This Safeguarding Policy is approved by the Board of Directors of Knowledge for World Conservation (KWC) and shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years or as required by law or donor requirements. Any changes to the policy shall be communicated immediately to all Responsible Persons.

6. Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Knowledge for World Conservation (KWC) on;

Date: 19/09/2018

Signature: *Alhassan Attah*

Name: Alhassan Attah

Position: Chairman of KWC Board

Date of last review: 12/12/2023