

# Child Safe Organization Operating Policy



**Division: People & Culture**

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In alignment with World Vision Canada's (WVC) 'Core Values' and in keeping with the guiding principles for Christian living, biblical stewardship, responsibility to support and protect children, WVC employees and representatives, and the ongoing desire for organizational excellence, the Senior Leadership Team has approved this policy. We believe that child protection is everyone's responsibility, at both the corporate and individual level.

**Purpose:** In support of World Vision's International Guidelines for the Protection of Children, our endorsement of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols<sup>1</sup>, and our Christian identity, WVC affirms our commitment to being a Child Safe Organization (CSO). As such, WVC is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where children are protected by instituting measures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and all other forms of violence against children.

WVC will take all steps possible to avoid putting children at risk of harm and will take steps to minimize and mitigate any child protection-related risks, such as maintaining current and up to date standards in accordance with international standards and Canadian laws.

All WVC board members, employees, representatives, and volunteers as well as those who may come into direct contact with children as a result of their employment, volunteer activities or through any WV office or program will be asked to periodically review the Child Safe Organization Operating Policy and relevant standards as well as to provide the 'necessary searches' on suitability for working with children. The requirement and frequency of the searches are set out in the Child Protection Standards, and the individual searches will be maintained in a secure environment and controlled by the P&C department.

Any individual who does not have necessary and satisfactory searches on file:

- will not be allowed to continue working with children;
- will not be allowed to work in an environment where children are generally present;

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<sup>1</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography can be viewed at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-conflict.htm>,  
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-sale.htm>.

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- will be prevented from travelling to a location for the express purpose of working with children or visiting sites where children are located.

**Scope:** All board members, employees, representatives, volunteers, visitors, sponsors and any other individuals who come in contact with children as a result of their employment, volunteer activities or through a WV office or program must abide by this policy and related standards.

Child protection standards outline measures that apply to all WVC staff and affiliates as well as our activities occurring not only in the field with children, but also in our offices and events in Canada. Child Protection standards outline measures in the following areas:

- Awareness raising, sensitization and training of staff in child protection, including behaviour protocols, monitoring and reporting
- Recruitment, necessary and satisfactory searches to deter persons with child related offences from working in World Vision
- Behaviour protocols for staff, volunteers, consultants, visitors and other affiliates of World Vision
- Internal reporting mechanisms and management processes for allegations of child abuse by staff or other World Vision affiliates
- Visitor requirements in relation to child protection
- Confidentiality of information relating to children
- Communications guidelines regarding children
- Safe online practices and behaviour
- Ensuring that measures are taken to prevent risks to children participating in projects or programs
- Ensuring that effective follow-up takes place when the child protection protocols have been violated

**Responsibility:** WVC in compliance with WVI Child Protection Standards, will develop Child Protection Standards which guide the principles and practices for the measures outlined above.

Every WV employee, board member, volunteer, or representative is responsible for:

- being familiar with and following the guidelines (including the Behaviour Protocols in Appendix A) provided in this policy and in the Child Protection Standards,
- reporting any instances of 'Child Abuse', and taking appropriate action in accordance with the standards.

The Child Protection Committee (CPC), made up of representatives from across WVC departments, is responsible for:

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- ensuring complete compliance with World Vision Canada’s Child Safe Organization Policy and Standards across all divisions of the organization and providing guidance on child protection issues as required.
- ensuring there is a Child Protection training program in place and to monitor completeness of that training by all employees of WVC.
- Ensuring that Child Protection incident reports are completed in a timely manner
- Ensuring the completion of the Child Protection Policy Update Report every six months

The People & Culture department will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all new employees, representatives and volunteers are provided appropriate orientation and training surround the Child Safe Organization Policy and standrads
- maintaining all copies of the necessary searches in a safe and secure environment.

### Principles:

In order to have integrity in promoting child protection in communities where we work and to decision-makers, WVC must be above reproach when it comes to child protection. Every person who shares in the work of WVC also shares in the requirement to take every reasonable precaution to protect the children and families we serve. How we care for the most vulnerable among us is an outward expression and evidence of our love for God and all of His creation.

Child protection is also an expression of WVC’s Christian commitment. God’s love for all children is seen through Jesus’ high regard for children and his instruction to cause no child to stumble, and through the Bible’s special focus on care for orphans and the “least among us”. WVC is committed to improving the well being of children around the world and are motivated by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ and the scriptures:

#### **Matthew 18: 5 & 6**

And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drowned in the sea.

#### **Matthew 19:14**

Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

World Vision believes that:

- Children deserve the essentials of life
- Child abuse of any form whether it be physical, mental or a refusal or rights, is never acceptable.

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## Definitions:

**Code of Conduct** – Operating policy guiding what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct and behaviour at WVC.

**Representatives:** Shall include, but may not be limited to, any individual, contractor, company, organization, and/or agency that acts on behalf of, for, or in association with World Vision Canada, pursuant to a contract or otherwise.

**Necessary Searches**– A criminal record search(s), a local indices search(s), and any other search that WVC, in its sole and absolute discretion, may deem necessary. For greater certainty, such other searches may include a vulnerable sector search, where available.

### ***Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and all other forms of Violence Against Children***

- **Abuse:** Any intentional act to harm a child within relationships of responsibility, trust or power.
- **Neglect:** The deprivation of a child’s basic needs when an adult care giver has the means to provide for those needs. Basic needs include health, education, emotional and spiritual development, nutrition, clothing, medical and dental care, supervision, shelter and safe living conditions.
- **Exploitation:** The use of a child for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation targets children through an abuse of power or trust for sexual purposes; examples include child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual abuse.
- **Violence:** The use or threat of physical force or power that harms a child. Although abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of violence, we include “violence” as a separate category in order to address additional threats from which children need to be protected, including gang violence, bullying, harassment and playground violence.

## Procedures:

Searches and Sign-offs for Child Safe Organization

## References and related Statements of Policy and Procedure:

Code of Conduct

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### Appendix A

The rules of behaviour to protect children are based on local and culturally appropriate interactions with children and are included in each National Child Protection Policy. The following provides a list of 'Acceptable' and 'Unacceptable' behaviours when dealing with children.

Acceptable Behaviour – WVC employees, representatives, and volunteers:

- Are careful about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children, and their behaviour demonstrates a respect for children and their rights
- Ensure that all physical contact with children is locally appropriate
- Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour
- Accept responsibility for personal behavior and actions as a representative of the organization
- Are always accountable for their response to a child's behaviour, even if a child behaves in a sexually inappropriate manner; adults avoid being placed in a compromising or vulnerable position with children
- Where possible and practical, follow the 'two-adult' rule while conducting WV work, wherein two or more adults supervise all activities that involve children, and are visible and present at all times
- Comply with child protection related investigations (internal and external) and make available any documentary or other information necessary for the completion of the investigation

Unacceptable Behaviour – WVC employees, representatives and volunteers within and outside their work environment do not:

- Behave in an inappropriate physical manner, or develop a sexual relationship with a child (under 18 years of age), regardless of the country specific legal age of consent
- Fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate or abusive, including language that causes shame or humiliation, or is belittling or degrading
- Spend excessive or unnecessary time alone with a child, away from others or behind closed doors or in a secluded area
- Condone or participate in behaviour with children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive; including harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse
- Hire children in any form of child labour; in particular, WV employees, representatives and volunteers should not hire children as 'house help', unless it is within the best interest of the child in alignment with local law and international standards (Child labour is work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or that interferes with their schooling. See ILO Convention 182 and 138 for further explanation of child labour)
- Hit or use other corporal punishment against a child while the child is in WV care or the WVC employee, representative or volunteer is conducting WV work
- Take a child alone in a vehicle for WV work, unless it is absolutely necessary, and with parent/guardian and managerial consent.