



Working with faith schools on water, sanitation  
and hygiene for children and communities

## Safeguarding Policy

### **Introduction**

Faith in Water (FiW) works in global development and its projects are aimed at directly addressing the needs of vulnerable communities and groups. Faith in Water has a zero tolerance towards any form of bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse. We believe everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. We believe everyone has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of other people. We recognise that children, young people and adults who are unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation, for whatever reason, require particular protection.

Most of our work is delivered by our partners. This safeguarding policy applies to all staff working for FiW, either as a permanent member of staff or a contractor or freelancer, and also to all downstream partners engaged on FiW projects, regardless of seniority or role. The aim of this policy is:

1. To promote the safeguarding of children, young people and adults directly served by Faith in Water and our partners;
2. To ensure we provide a safe and trusted environment for anyone we come into contact with, including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.
3. To ensure that any abuse of children, young people and adults that occurs in the context of Faith in Water's projects and programmes is reported and addressed, with appropriate action taken.
4. To outline the actions to be taken in the event of an allegation of abuse of a child, young person or adult.

### **What do we mean by safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is defined for this guidance as:

1. Protecting children, young people or adults from abuse, exploitation, violence, bullying, harassment or neglect;
2. Ensuring we do not damage the health and development of any children, young people or adults during our work;
3. Ensuring we provide safe and effective care to the children, young people or adults we work with;
4. Ensuring that the children, young people or adults we work with have the best possible outcomes from their contact with us.

### **Who is a vulnerable adult?**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, are old and frail, or have some form of illness, or due to their life circumstances lack capacity.

# Faith in Water's Safeguarding Policy

The following policy applies to everyone involved in a Faith in Water project, whether working for us or one of our partners, whether an employee, contractor or volunteer. It sets out what we expect of ourselves and those working on our projects, and of Faith in Water's responsibilities as an organisation. It also makes clear that, as a core principle, Faith in Water has a zero tolerance for any form of sexual exploitation, bullying, harassment or abuse.

## Contents

1. Behaviour and conduct
2. Raising concerns
3. Faith in Water's responsibilities
4. Procedure for investigating concerns
5. Sexual abuse and exploitation

### 1. **Behaviour and conduct**

**The standards of behaviour we expect of those working with us (staff, contractors, project partners, volunteers) are as follows:**

- a. We have a duty of care to everyone taking part in our projects.
- b. Do not, under any circumstances, engage in or tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse of anyone you encounter during the course of your work with us.
- c. Always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the person you are working with at all times.
- d. Always act within professional boundaries: ensure all contact with children/ young people/vulnerable adults is appropriate and necessary for the activity.
- e. Treat people fairly, with dignity and without prejudice or discrimination.
- f. Do not 'friend' or 'follow' the children or young people you are working with on social networking sites. Do not seek to establish a personal relationship with them.
- g. Behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times. Avoid behaviour or language that could be seen as bullying or harassment.
- h. Never engage in sexual activity or suggestive banter with children, young people or any other beneficiaries.
- i. Do not undertake any actions while working on a FiW programme which might be considered to bring Faith in Water or its partners into disrepute (eg, use of prostitutes).

### 2. **Raising concerns**

**If you have concerns:**

- a. If you have concerns about the behaviour of any person towards another, or if you see or hear something that makes you uncomfortable, whether it involves a manager, colleague, partner, friend or chaperone, you must report your concerns to your manager.

- b. Do not ignore a concern and do nothing. You have a duty to report your concern to your manager if:
  - i. Abuse is observed or suspected;
  - ii. An allegation of abuse is made;
  - iii. A vulnerable person discloses abuse;
  - iv. You feel uncomfortable about someone's behaviour towards another.
- c. Project partners receiving reports of concerns from their staff or from other people must convey them to Faith in Water.
- d. If you are work for a project partner and you feel your concerns are not being taken seriously by your manager, you may report them directly, and if necessary in confidence, to Faith in Water (email: [info@faithinwater.org](mailto:info@faithinwater.org)).
- e. You may also report your concerns to Faith in Water's Chair of Trustees James Morant by emailing [chairoftrustees@faithinwater.org](mailto:chairoftrustees@faithinwater.org).
- f. If you are unhappy with Faith in Water's response, you may report the issue to the UK's Charity Commission at [www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity).

### **3. Faith in Water's responsibilities**

- a. Faith in Water requires all partners to sign up to this safeguarding policy and ensure that any staff / consultants working on FiW projects do so too.
- b. Faith in Water will provide relevant guidance and training on safeguarding to project partners, including refresher training as appropriate.
- c. In all projects involving children, young people and vulnerable adults, informed consent must be obtained from the child or person or from their parent, legal guardian or organisation with parental responsibility (eg school), and documented evidence of consent kept.
- d. As part of obtaining informed consent, Faith in Water and/or our project partners will outline our duty of care to project beneficiaries using appropriate language and terminology.
- e. In all our work, we will endeavour to create an atmosphere where people feel able to report any concerns they may have, and know how to do so.
- f. If any concerns or allegations of abuse or mistreatment are reported to us, Faith in Water will investigate them fully and take appropriate action. This may include terminating employment contracts or grant agreements with downstream partners, and/or reporting the case to legal authorities.
- g. Any reports of safeguarding concerns will be recorded in Faith in Water's register of safeguarding issues. FiW will immediately alert its Board of Trustees and investigate the concerns. (See 4. Procedure for investigating safeguarding issues, below.)
- h. The results of our investigations into such concerns will be documented in FiW's Safeguarding Register and recorded in project reports, and made known to Faith in Water's Board and donors.
- i. Serious allegations (such as sexual exploitation) will be reported to the Charity Commission and, where appropriate, appropriate legal authorities.
- j. Transparency, honesty and fairness will be the core principles that govern how Faith in Water handles allegations of abuse/mistreatment.

#### **4. Procedure for investigating safeguarding issues**

- a. FiW shall treat any allegation or concern regarding any abuse/mistreatment seriously.
- b. The Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO) is responsible for investigating safeguarding issues and reporting to the designated Safeguarding Officer on Faith in Water's Board of Trustees.
- c. When an issue is reported, the SSO will inform the designated Safeguarding Officer on the Board of Trustees and begin an investigation. This will include consulting FiW leadership, local managers and programme staff to gather additional information as appropriate. Other groups may also be consulted such as community leaders, partner organisations and legal authorities.
- d. If deemed appropriate, the individual alleged to have committed the abuse may be taken out of his/her position. This may mean the individual is put into another position, or put on leave with pay, leave without pay, or suspension.
- e. After gathering information, the SSO will make an assessment of the seriousness and validity of the allegation. This will be documented in FiW's safeguarding register and formally reported to FiW's Board of Trustees in a timely manner.
- f. The report will be disclosed to those with a legitimate need to know. This is important to avoid damaging the reputation of those suspected of wrongdoing and subsequently found innocent, as well as to protect the confidentiality of alleged victims of abuse.
- g. Serious cases will be reported to the Charity Commission and relevant legal or governmental authorities, and shared with donors, partner organisations and community leaders as appropriate. FiW may also take action such as terminating employment contracts or contracts with downstream partners.
- h. Transparency, honesty and fairness will be the core principles that govern how ARC handles allegations of abuse/mistreatment.
- i. FiW will provide appropriate emotional, practical and, if necessary, legal support to victims of abuse/mistreatment. The support needs of the victim will be determined during the investigation and in consultation with the victim.

#### **5. Sexual abuse and exploitation**

**Faith in Water will not tolerate sexual exploitation or abuse by its employees or any persons engaged in Faith in Water projects. For these purposes, sexual activity with any person less than eighteen years of age, regardless of any laws relating to consent, shall constitute the sexual exploitation and abuse of such person. Staff, consultants and partner organisations will take all reasonable and appropriate measures to prevent the exchange of money, goods, services, or other things of value, for sexual favours or activities, or from engaging in any sexual activities that are exploitative or degrading to any person, including bullying and harassment.**

## More information

Faith in Water's safeguarding policy is informed by UK and international legislation and standards that seek to protect children and vulnerable people. For example:

### **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) says every child has:**

- The right to a childhood including protection from all forms of violence
- The right to have their best interests at the heart of all we do
- The right to be educated
- The right to be healthy
- The right to be treated fairly
- The right to privacy
- The right to be heard
- Access to information from the media in a form they can understand

### **The Equality Act 2010**

This Act places a responsibility on public authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by an individual child, young person or adult and the process of assessment. No child or person must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs.

### **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse is any action by another person - adult or child - that causes significant harm to a child or young person. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also be about a lack of love, care and attention. An abused child can experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. We also know that adults or groups, who are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation, are also at risk of abuse and discrimination.

We know that children, young people and adults are at higher risk of abuse if they have a disability, belong to a minority group, or are experiencing mental health issues, bullying, substance misuse, or behavioural issues. Other types of abuse include:

- Traditional or customary practices that violate the rights of children
- Trafficking
- Sexual exploitation
- Child labour
- Early/forced marriage.

### **Types of abuse**

**Physical abuse** is deliberately hurting a child, young person or adult causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

**Emotional abuse** is the emotional maltreatment or neglect of a child, young person or adult. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can cause serious harm. It may lead to a child, young person or adult thinking that they are worthless, unloved and inadequate. It can also include seeing or hearing domestic abuse, being subject to or

witnessing bullying which can cause a child, young person or adult to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Emotional abuse is a factor in all forms of abuse although it may exist alone.

**Neglect** is the ongoing failure to meet the basic needs of a child, young person or adult, which can lead to long-term harm. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, lack of supervision, access to medical care or keeping the child, young person or adult safe from danger. It may also include unresponsiveness to their basic emotional needs.

**Sexual abuse** is when a child, young person or adult is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This includes physical contact and can also involve a child, young person or adult looking at, or being the subject of, sexual images, or being encouraged to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or being groomed in preparation for abuse.

**Online abuse** is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks or playing games online. Sexual abuse can happen online too.

**Commercial exploitation**, including child labour, is also a form of abuse.

**Discrimination** is abuse that is motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards age, race, religion, gender, disability or cultural background.

### **Working with children, young people and adults**

When working with children, young people and adults, the following principles must always be at the heart of programme design and implementation:

- How can we involve children, young people and adults in discussions about how to make their lives better?
- How can we make sure that the children, young people and adults feel that their views and opinions have been listened to and respected?
- What must we do to make sure that both the children and the adults are properly prepared for such discussions?
- What must we do to ensure that the children, young people and adults involved are safe and protected at all times?
- How can children, young people and adults be equal partners in designing and delivering our programmes?

### **Consent**

When working with children and young people in any capacity:

- Informed consent from the child, young person, parent, legal guardian or organisation with parental responsibility for the child or young person (eg, school) must always be obtained and documented evidence of consent must be kept.
- Children aged 16 and 17 year olds can sign their own consent form in most cases.
- Children under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

When working with adults in any capacity, informed consent must be obtained and documented evidence of consent must be kept.

## **Working with partners**

Faith in Water will:

(i) Implement in agreements with partners, consultants and service providers or grantees a clause as follows:

*“Faith in Water believes that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, and all children, young people and vulnerable people should be protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation. Faith in Water partners are required to adhere to its Safeguarding Policy and to promote the values and standards laid down in this policy in their work for and on behalf of Faith in Water.”*

(ii) Actively promote its Safeguarding Policy by making the Policy publicly available through the Faith in Water website ([www.faithinwater.org](http://www.faithinwater.org));

(iii) Provide relevant guidance to FiW partners when requested, aimed at the safeguarding of vulnerable persons.

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