

# Safeguarding Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE

The Rewilding Academy is committed to safeguarding the safety, dignity, and well-being of all individuals who interact with its operations. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to establish best practices that ensure the protection of all individuals involved in or affected by the Organisation—including vulnerable groups such as children and at-risk adults—from harm related to our operations. This includes any harm that may result from:

- The actions or behavior of the Organisation representatives or associated personnel
- The design and delivery of the Organisation's programs and activities

This Policy outlines the Organisation's safeguarding commitments and clearly defines the responsibilities of all representatives and affiliated personnel. For the purposes of this Policy, 'representatives' includes the Organisation's personnel, and any elected or appointed officers, employees, agents, contractors, consultants, interns, partners, and volunteers.

## 2. WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

2.1. *Safeguarding* refers to the responsibility to take all reasonable and proactive measures to prevent harm—particularly abuse, harassment, and sexual exploitation—and to ensure the protection of individuals, especially vulnerable adults and children. It also involves responding swiftly, appropriately, and effectively when harm occurs.

2.2. Safeguarding is a universal obligation that applies across all of the Organisation's programs, partnerships, and personnel. It requires the active identification, prevention, and mitigation of risks related to harm, abuse, or exploitation. When incidents do occur, safeguarding demands robust, accountable, and transparent systems for response, reporting, and continuous learning. These systems must be survivor-centred, ensuring dignity, care, and support for those affected, while also upholding the civil rights of those accused or under investigation.

2.3. Additional terms and definitions relevant to safeguarding are provided in the glossary at the end of this policy.

## 3. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to:

- All representatives, members and employees of the Organisation

- Associated persons and organizations involved in any work or activities related to the Organisation, including but not limited to officers, agents, contractors, consultants, interns, and volunteers.
- Partner organizations and their representatives during Organisation-related activities

## **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

4.1 The Organisation is firmly committed to ensuring that every individual we engage with—regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnic background—has the right to live free from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We maintain a strict zero-tolerance policy toward bullying, harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse by staff or associated personnel.

4.2 This Policy addresses key areas of safeguarding, including child protection, adult safeguarding, and the prevention of child labor and sexual exploitation and abuse.

4.3 The Organisation integrates safeguarding across all aspects of its work, guided by the three foundational pillars: prevention, reporting, and response.

## **5. PREVENTION**

### **5.1. Organizational Responsibilities**

- Ensure that all staff and associated personnel are informed and trained on safeguarding principles relevant to their role
- Integrate safeguarding measures into the design and implementation of programs
- Implement safe recruitment practices, including necessary background checks and reference verifications
- Provide access to this policy to all personnel and ensure understanding of its requirements
- Maintain mechanisms for safe and confidential reporting

### **5.2. Representatives Responsibilities**

- Treat all people with dignity and respect, regardless of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Avoid any relationships—personal or professional—that involve or could be perceived to involve coercion, manipulation, or abuse of power.
- Refrain from any form of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or at-risk adults.
- Never engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the local age of consent or customs.
- Not engage in or support any form of child labour, forced labour, or human trafficking.

- Ensure the physical and emotional safety of participants during activities and events, including safe transportation, accommodation, and supervision practices.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times and avoid behaviour that could be perceived as inappropriate or overly familiar.
- Protect confidential and sensitive information shared by program participants, particularly when disclosure could lead to harm or discrimination.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that digital communications and use of images or recordings of beneficiaries are ethical, respectful, and in line with informed consent.
- Immediately report any concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of safeguarding breaches, including any observed or suspected misconduct by colleagues, to the Integrity Committee or external authorities.
- Cooperate fully with safeguarding investigations and respect the confidentiality of the process.

## 6. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

**6.1. When to Report** – Any suspected or actual safeguarding concern must be reported as soon as possible. Immediate reporting enables swift action to protect individuals.

**6.2. How to Report** – Representatives or personnel should report concerns to the Organisation's Integrity Commission. If the concern involves those individuals or if the reporter does not feel safe doing so, they may report directly to a Safeguarding Focal Point or the Coordination Committee, or use the designated confidential reporting channel.

A Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form (see Appendix 1) must be completed with all available details.

**6.3. Whistleblower Protection** – All individuals reporting concerns in good faith will be protected against retaliation. Anonymous reporting is permitted but may limit follow-up.

## 7. RESPONSE

**7.1. Immediate Protection** - The Organisation will prioritize the safety and well-being of affected individuals and take urgent action where necessary to prevent further harm. This may include removing the alleged perpetrator from their position, temporarily suspending them during investigation, restricting their access to vulnerable persons or program areas, or taking other interim protective measures until the matter is resolved.

**7.2. Investigation** - An impartial investigation will be launched, conducted by qualified external parties, in accordance with international safeguarding and due process standards. The investigation will respect the confidentiality, dignity, and rights of all parties involved and ensure a fair, transparent, and survivor-centred approach.

**7.3. Disciplinary Measures** – If the investigation finds a breach of this policy, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, including but not limited to dismissal, contract termination, or legal proceedings.

**7.4. Support to Survivors** - The Organisation is committed to providing survivor-centred support, including medical care, counselling, and legal assistance as appropriate. The wishes and dignity of survivors will guide all actions.

**7.5. Confidentiality** - Information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis. All safeguarding records will be securely stored in compliance with applicable data protection laws.

**7.6. Learning and Improvement** - Safeguarding incidents will inform improvements to policy, practice, and training. Regular reviews of safeguarding processes will be undertaken.

**7.7. Legal Obligations** - In cases where a safeguarding concern involves potential criminal activity, the Organisation will take appropriate legal action, guided by legal advice and the specific circumstances. Survivors will be fully supported in exercising their civil and legal rights.

The Organisation will cooperate fully with law enforcement and any external investigations or legal proceedings.

Our aim is to ensure a comprehensive, lawful, and survivor-centred response to all safeguarding concerns—one that upholds justice, prioritizes safety, and protects the dignity and well-being of all individuals in our community.

## 8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Safeguarding:** The proactive approach to preventing and responding to harm, abuse, and exploitation.
- **Survivor:** A person who has experienced or is reported to have experienced abuse or harm.
- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18.
- **At-risk adult:** An adult who may be unable to protect themselves from harm due to disability, age, or other vulnerabilities.
- **Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA):** Abuse of power or trust for sexual purposes, including transactional sex and trafficking.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care, resulting in harm.
- **Psychological abuse:** Emotional harm, including humiliation, threats, or isolation.

## 9. REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy shall be reviewed every four years or earlier if necessary due to legislative or programmatic changes.

## 10. REVISION HISTORY

All approved amendments to this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) are documented in the table below to ensure transparency and version control:

Revision ref.	Description of revision	Effective Date of Revision

**Effective Date:** 14 May 2025

**Next Review:** 13 May 2029

## Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

### Purpose of this Form

This form is intended to capture essential information following an allegation, suspicion, or disclosure of a potential safeguarding concern. Its completion should never delay or prevent immediate contact with the police or relevant authorities in cases of emergencies or urgent safeguarding situations.

Name of the person completing this Form:
Date:
Contact details (if not anonymous):
Your position or relationship to whom your safeguarding concern is about:
Name/names of person/s the safeguarding concern or incident is about:
Date and time of the incident(s):
Address (if known) of the person the safeguarding concern is about:
Telephone number (if known) of the person the safeguarding concern is about:
Age and Date of Birth of alleged victim (if known):
Name, Telephone Number and Address of Parent, carer, or guardian of alleged victim:
What have you witnessed or been told?
Has the alleged victim informed you?
Action taken so far:
Have you contacted external agencies?
Please feel free to share any other details:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_