



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Functional Area	Operations – Safeguarding Unit
Business Owner	Chief Operating Officer Chair of the Board of Directors (for Board members)
Version	1.0
Approval Body	Chief Executive Officer Governance & Nominating Committee Board of Directors
Approval Date	Chief Executive Officer – February 28 2019 Governance & Nominating Committee - April 10 2019 Board of Directors – April 11, 2019
Effective Date	April 12, 2019
Review Date	This Policy shall be reviewed as deemed appropriate but no less frequently than 24 months following the last date of approval.

1. SCOPE

Plan International Canada Inc. (“**Plan Canada**”) is an independent charitable organization that strives to achieve significant and lasting impact on the lives of Children and Young People, and to secure equality for girls. We respect all people, appreciate differences, and challenge inequality in our programs and our workplace. We support Children and Young People to increase their confidence and to change their own lives.

Protection of Children: As an international, child-centred development organization, we are committed to a vision of the world where all children realize their full potential in societies that respect all people’s rights and dignity.

Violence against children is against our values and principles as an Organization, and in direct opposition to the aims of our work. We will work to ensure that children do not experience harm, abuse, exploitation, or any other form of violence as a result of their engagement with us or our programs, projects, events, and processes. Children who are marginalized because of their gender may be at higher risk from certain forms of violence including sexual and gender based violence, we will work to ensure that our approach to safeguarding is gender responsive.

Young People: The scope of this Policy extends to Young People we are supporting or are in contact with through our youth engagement work. We recognize that Young People may face different sociological, psychological and health problems from younger Children and older adults. We also recognize that, while some Young People engaging with us will be over the legal age of majority in their jurisdiction and may be used to a higher degree of independence than younger persons, they still require protection against violence.

Scope Limitation: This Policy, being an internal Policy, does not require that Plan Canada Associates intervene in the lives of Children/Young People outside of their engagement, association or contact with us whether as a sponsored Child, a participant in our programs, projects, events, or youth advisory panels, or as part of a fundraising or influencing campaign. In some cases, however, Canadian law requires the reporting of suspected child abuse regardless of who the perpetrator is. See Procedure #2 – Reporting a Safeguarding Concern for details.

Application of this Policy to complaints by Plan Canada Employees under age 25 of Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying in the Plan Canada Workplace. All Plan Canada Employees are required to comply with this Policy in addition to Plan Canada’s *Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Violence and Bullying Prevention Policy* and related legislative requirements. Allegations by Plan Canada Employees under age 25 of incidents of workplace discrimination, harassment, violence, bullying or other activity prohibited under Ontario employment, safety or human rights legislation and/or Plan Canada’s Workplace Policies shall be managed by Plan Canada’s Talent & Culture Department in accordance with such legislation and policies.

2. APPLICATION AND DEFINITIONS

APPLICATION: This Policy applies to all **Associates**.

DEFINITIONS: For the purposes of this Policy:

“**Associates**” refers to all Employees, Plan Canada Board members, volunteers, students, interns, consultants, contractors and representatives of partner organizations engaged by Plan Canada.

“**Board**” means the Board of Directors of Plan Canada.

“**Child**” or “**Children**” means any person(s) below the age of 18 years.

“**Employee**” means a person who has entered into an employment relationship with Plan Canada including full-time and part-time, regular and temporary employees.

“**Gender Responsive Safeguarding**” is a safeguarding approach that:

- takes full account of gender in considering the specific safeguarding needs of girls, boys and all gender identities;
- integrates safeguarding measures that address protection risks for Children and Young People (girls, boys, young women, young men, and Children of all gender identities) that stem from issues relating to gender bias and discrimination; and
- supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of Children and Youth in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and increased safety and protection.

“**Harm**” refers to a detrimental effect on a Child or Young Person’s physical, psychological or emotional well being

“**People Leader**” means an Employee who has responsibility for managing or supervising the work of Employees or other Associates (excluding Board members).

“**PII**” refers to Plan International, Inc., including when operating through one of its subsidiaries. It generally includes international headquarters, regional offices, liaison offices, and country offices.

“**Safeguarding Children and Young People**” refers to the responsibilities, preventative, responsive and referral measures that we undertake to protect Children and Young People, ensuring that no Child or Young Person is subject to any form of harm as a result of their association with Plan Canada. This includes: (i) ensuring that their contact with us and those associated with us, and/or their participation in our activities, interventions and operations is safe; (ii) where there are concerns over a Child or Young Person’s welfare or where a Child or Young Person has been subject to violence, appropriate and timely actions are taken in response; and (iii) incidents are analyzed so as to ensure continued learning for Plan Canada.

“Safeguarding Focal Point” is the individual who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of this Policy and serves as the main contact for all aspects of safeguarding at Plan Canada. See *Terms of Reference for Plan Canada Safeguarding Focal Point*.

“Safeguarding Leads” refers to the individuals responsible for implementing this Policy and as the main contact for all aspects of safeguarding in their Division at Plan Canada. See *Terms of Reference for Plan Canada Safeguarding Leads*.

“Safeguarding Committee” is the internal Committee established to discuss, plan review and verify safeguarding implementation at Plan Canada. See *Terms of Reference for Plan Canada’s Safeguarding Committee*.

“Safeguarding Implementation Standards” are established by the Global Hub and lay down the requirements for ensuring safeguarding measures are embedded in all parts of our operations and interventions.

“Young Person /People” or **“Youth”** means a person(s) between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This group spans the categories of “children,” “teenagers” and “adults,” but regards Young People as having particular safeguarding needs, requiring distinct consideration aside from younger Children and older adults.

“Violence against a Child or Young Person includes all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, emotional ill-treatment or psychological violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, harassment, and commercial or other exploitation of a Child or Young Person. Acts of violence can also take place online through, for example, the internet, social media or mobile phones. It may be an intentional act involving the use of physical force or power or it may be failing to act to prevent violence against a Child or Young Person. Violence consists of anything which individuals, groups, institutions or organizations do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the Child or Young Person’s wellbeing, dignity, survival and development.

“Visitor” means a person who visits Plan Canada’s offices or programs and may come into contact with Children and Young People including media, visiting sponsors or donors, or researchers.

3. PURPOSE

Plan Canada is fully committed to protecting Children and Young People who engage with us or our programs, projects, events, and processes from violence are also committed to promoting gender responsive safeguarding of Children and Young People.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that:

- Our Associates are skilled, confident, understand, and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard Children and Young People from violence, and to engage positively with them in ways that enhance the fulfilment of our mission;
- We have in place procedures to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our Associates and Visitors, and ourselves as an Organization, that result in violence against a Child or Young Person and/or places them at risk of violence; and
- Children and Young People we work with are aware of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from the actions and behaviours of our Associates and Visitors, and how they can report their concerns or incidents.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Plan Canada is committed to the gender responsive safeguarding of Children and Young People from all forms of violence. We take very seriously our responsibility to ensure that we, as an organization, and anyone who represents us, do not in any way harm, abuse or commit any other act of violence against Children and Young People or place them at risk of the same.

We promote Child and Youth safe practices, approaches, interventions and environments which respect, recognize and respond to the specific safeguarding needs and addresses the protection risks of differing gender and other identities. We will challenge and do not tolerate inequality, discrimination or exclusion.

We respond to a Child or Young Person who may be in need of protection and or psycho-social support and intend that their welfare and best interests will at all times be of paramount consideration.

We ensure that all who work with and engage with us understand and are supported in their meeting safeguarding roles and responsibilities. We take positive action to prevent anyone who might be a risk to Children and Young People from becoming involved with us, and take stringent measures against any Associate or Visitor who perpetrates an act of violence against a Child or Young Person.

5. PRINCIPLES

This Policy is underpinned by the following set of principles that guide its implementation:

1. All Children and Young People aged under 18 years have equal rights to protection from all forms of violence as declared in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises as fundamental human rights, the dignity, worth and equal rights of people at any age, thus including Young People aged 18 to 24 years old.

2. The human rights of Children and Young People who engage with us will be respected and applied to all irrespective of age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, race, language, religious or political beliefs, marital status, disability, physical or mental health, family, socio-economic or cultural background, class, any history of conflict with the law (subject to limitations) or any other aspect of their background or identity. Inequality, exclusion, and discrimination will be challenged and will not be tolerated.
3. All Children and Young People should be empowered and encouraged to fulfil their potential. Decisions made about Children and Young People will be made, whenever possible, with their participation and in their best interest, giving full consideration to how such decisions will affect them. Children will be encouraged to express their views, and this will be given 'due weight' in accordance with their age and level of maturity.
4. We have a responsibility to care for and protect Children and Young People, especially those that are vulnerable, and make sure they are not harmed.
5. No Child or Young Person must suffer harm, intentionally or unintentionally, as a result of their engagement, association or contact with us whether as a sponsored Child, a participant in our programs projects, events, processes, or youth advisory panels or as part of a fundraising or influencing campaign.
6. We have a responsibility to inform and empower Children and Young People so that they learn about and are better able to exercise their rights to protection. We will work with Children and Young People to ensure they understand the essence of this Policy, our safeguarding commitment, and the means by which they can report breaches or suspected breaches of this Policy. We will also involve them in the development of safeguarding measures within Plan Canada in accordance with their evolving capacities.
7. We are open and transparent and will hold ourselves to account for our commitment to safeguard Children and Young People. Safeguarding concerns can be raised and discussed, poor practice and inappropriate behaviour challenged and addressed, and our safeguarding measures continuously reviewed and strengthened to ensure we remain accountable to Children, Young People and their families.
8. We will act on safeguarding concerns, ensuring that our actions are timely, appropriate and centred around the Child or Young Person, taking into account their gender and other specific safeguarding needs and vulnerabilities.
9. We will work in partnership with others to promote the safeguarding of Children and Young People within organizations engaged with us and in the wider community.
10. Our safeguarding approach recognizes and responds to the specific safeguarding risks and needs of differing genders and other identities. It takes appropriate measures to address gender bias and other forms of discrimination and violence which may arise as a result.
11. Our safeguarding approach is mainstreamed in all stages of our operations, programs, projects, activities, influencing work and interventions in both development and

humanitarian settings, thus ensuring that these are designed and delivered in a manner that does not harm Children and Young People.

6. CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

By the very nature of Plan Canada's work, we have in our possession detailed information about the Children and Young People we serve. This information has been given on the understanding that it will be used to find the Child a sponsor or to support Youth Engagement Programs, among other purposes. It is our responsibility to ensure that this information is used solely for these purposes and is not misused. Associates must follow Plan Canada's *Privacy Policy* and related Procedures, and the privacy and confidentiality protection provisions set out in the *Safeguarding Procedures* when dealing with confidential and personal information of Children and Young People.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities for the implementation and management of this Policy are as follows:

1. The **Chair of the Board** is responsible for:
 - a. setting the tone at the top by providing a supportive environment that promotes Policy compliance by Board members;
 - b. ensuring that all breaches/suspected breaches made pursuant to this Policy involving Board members are investigated, documented and retained; and
 - c. through the services of the Board Secretariat, ensuring that Plan Canada's *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)* is executed and retained prior to the commencement of a new Board member's engagement and on an annual basis thereafter.

2. The **Governance and Nominating Committee (GNC)** of the Board is responsible for:
 - a. overseeing, on behalf of the Board, Management's implementation and management of this Policy;
 - b. reviewing and recommending to the Board, for its approval, this Policy and any revisions thereto; and
 - c. briefing the Board on an annual basis on the implementation of/compliance to this Policy.

3. The **Board** is responsible for:
 - a. reviewing and approving this Policy and any revisions thereto, upon recommendation of the CEO and the GNC;
 - b. receiving annual updates from the GNC on the implementation and management of this Policy; and
 - c. Individual Board members are responsible for complying with this Policy.

4. The **Chief Executive Officer** of Plan Canada is responsible for:
 - a. approving this Policy and any revisions thereto, and recommending its approval to the Board, through the GNC;
 - b. setting the tone at the top by providing a supportive environment that promotes Policy compliance by Plan Canada Associates (other than Board members) and Visitors;
 - c. ensuring the implementation and monitoring of this Policy for Associates (other than Board members) and Visitors;
 - d. reviewing and recommending to the Board, through the GNC, approval of this Policy;
 - e. annually briefing the Board, through the GNC, on the implementation of this Policy and any proposed revisions thereto;
 - f. ensuring that all breaches/suspected breaches made pursuant to this Policy involving Associates (other than Board members) and Visitors are investigated, documented and retained;
 - g. ensuring that Plan Canada has in place local procedures that are consistent with the *Global Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People*¹ and with the global document *Reporting and Responding to Safeguarding Issues* which outlines the reporting requirements and the manner in which they are to be escalated; and
 - h. ensuring that Plan Canada implements the *Global Safeguarding Implementation Standards* as they apply to the Plan Canada context, to the people (Associates and Visitors), Children and Young People with whom it engages, as well as the processes, programs, projects, events and activities that it undertakes.

5. The **Executive Management Team** is responsible for:
 - a. In consultation with Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point, appointing Safeguarding Leads from their Business Units/Programs/Projects;
 - b. working with Talent & Culture to ensure that Safeguarding Leads within their portfolios have their specific safeguarding responsibilities accurately reflected in their job descriptions and are reviewed and evaluated within the performance management process against clear standards/KPIs; and
 - c. ensuring that this Policy is fully embedded within their areas of responsibility in accordance with the *Safeguarding Implementation Standards*;

¹ Dated November 2017.

6. The **Chief Operating Officer** of Plan Canada is responsible for:
 - a. overseeing the development and implementation of Procedures to ensure compliance with this Policy;
 - b. undertaking a periodic review to assess compliance with this Policy and overseeing changes as a result of this review;
 - c. ensuring that all breaches/suspected breaches made pursuant to this Policy involving Associates (other than Board members) and Visitors are investigated, documented and retained
 - d. ensuring this Policy is communicated and accessible to all Plan Canada Associates and Visitors;
 - e. ensuring the appointment of a Safeguarding Focal Point and Safeguarding Leads to function in accordance with their respective Terms of Reference; and
 - f. approving Supporting Documents to this Policy.

7. **Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point** is responsible for carrying out the responsibilities assigned to this role set out in the *Terms of Reference for Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point*.

8. **Plan Canada's Safeguarding Leads** are responsible for carrying out the responsibilities assigned to these roles in their Department as set out in the *Terms of Reference for Plan Canada's Safeguarding Leads*.

9. **Plan Canada's Vice President, Talent & Culture** is responsible for:
 - a. ensuring that all Employees complete and submit a *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* prior to commencement of their employment, and on an annual basis thereafter;
 - b. implementing Procedure #1 – Recruitment and Ongoing Employment/Engagement with Plan Canada;
 - c. retaining the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* in the Employee's personnel file;
 - d. ensuring that all disclosures made pursuant to this Policy by Employees are documented and retained;
 - e. supporting Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point in determining appropriate disciplinary action related to breaches of this Policy;
 - f. supporting Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point and Safeguarding Leads in training Employees on this Policy and Supporting Documents; and
 - g. ensuring that where Employees (e.g. Safeguarding Focal Points/Leads) have job specific safeguarding responsibilities, these are accurately reflected in their job descriptions and reviewed and evaluated within the performance management process against clear standards/KPIs.²

² See page 45 of the *Global Hub Child Protection Standards and Implementation Manual*.

10. **People Leaders** are responsible for:

- a. ensuring that:
 - (i) Children, Young People and communities with which we engage, work or are in contact are made aware of the provisions of this Policy to ensure they have the confidence and ability to report any incidents occurring against Children and Young People;
 - (ii) Associates and Visitors are aware of the *Safeguarding Implementation Standards* that are applicable to their role or engagement with Plan Canada (see also section #13 regarding roles and responsibilities of Associates and Visitors);
 - (iii) they support and develop systems which maintains an environment which is safe for and prevents violence against Children and Young People;
 - (iv) this Policy is fully embedded within their areas of responsibility in accordance with the *Safeguarding Implementation Standards*;
 - (v) all breaches/suspected breaches made pursuant to this *Policy* involving Associates and Visitors within their areas of responsibility are investigated, documented and retained; and
- b. reporting to Executive Management, as may be required, on compliance with this *Policy*.

11. **Plan Canada's Legal Department** shall ensure that:

- a. Applicable contracts with third party organizations include the *Safeguarding Guidelines* (Appendix 2); and
- b. disclosures by third party organizations of breaches/suspected breaches of these *Safeguarding Guidelines* are referred to Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point for investigation.

12. **All Employees, Associates and Visitors** shall:

- a. commit and contribute to an environment where Children and Young People feel respected, supported, safe and protected;
- b. never act or behave in a manner that results in violence against a Child or Young Person or knowingly places a Child or Young Person at risk of violence;
- c. report and respond to safeguarding concerns and breaches/suspected breaches of this *Policy* in line with Plan Canada's *Safeguarding Procedures*; and
- d. be aware of and comply with this *Policy*, including the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (Appendix 1).

13. **Associates and Visitors** shall agree to comply with either:

- (i) the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* (Appendix 1); or
- (ii) other appropriate guidance developed by the relevant Safeguarding Lead on appropriate behaviour towards Children and Young People as relevant to their engagement using the *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct* as a guide; or

(iii) their own Code of Conduct, provided the contracting Manager ensures that it complies and is consistent with this Policy.

14. **Organizations that work with us** in carrying out our programs, projects, processes, events and/or activities involving Children and Young People must comply with the *Guidelines for Implementing Safeguarding in Partner Organizations* contained in Appendix 2.

8. REPORTING

Reporting: All Associates and Visitors shall report and respond to safeguarding concerns and breaches/suspected breaches of this *Policy* in line with Plan Canada's *Safeguarding Procedures*. See Procedure #2 – Reporting a Safeguarding Concern.

Investigations: All breaches/suspected breaches of this Policy will be investigated, by Plan Canada's Safeguarding Focal Point (or delegated Safeguarding Lead), documented and records retained. Depending upon the breach/suspected breach, a referral may be made to authorities for criminal investigation and/or prosecution.

9. ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this Policy can have serious implications for Plan Canada's success. Nothing in this Policy abrogates Plan Canada's right to take whatever action it deems appropriate in the event of non-compliance.

- In the case of Employees, violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, with or without notice, based on the severity of the infraction and the totality of the circumstances.
- Violations by Associates (other than Employees) may result in the termination, with or without notice, of the Associate's relationship or engagement with Plan Canada.
- Plan Canada may restrict its business relationships with any third-party organization as a result of its non-compliance with this Policy.
- Civil legal action may be brought against Associates and Visitors for violations of this Policy as Plan Canada, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate.
- Violations of this Policy which may violate local laws will be reported to authorities as required by law, or as otherwise deemed appropriate by Plan Canada.

Whistleblowing: If a legitimate concern about the suspected abuse of a Child or Young Person is raised but proves to be unfounded on investigation, no action will be taken against the reporter. However, appropriate sanctions will be applied in cases of false and malicious accusations. See Plan Canada’s *Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) Whistleblowing Policy and Reporting Procedures* for more information.

10. MONITORING

1. Plan Canada shall monitor compliance with this Policy through the mandatory tracking and auditing of the *Safeguarding Implementation Standards* and *Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)*.
2. Auditing against the *Safeguarding Implementation s* will be led by PII’s Global Assurance Department.

11. APPROVAL

1. Approval of this Policy, and any associated revisions, is required by each of Plan Canada’s Chief Executive Officer, its Governance & Nominating Committee and Board of Directors.
2. Approval of the Supporting Documents including Procedures, and any associated revisions, is required by Plan Canada’s Safeguarding Focal Point, its Chief Executive Officer, and other members of the Executive Management Team depending on the focus of the revisions.
3. Notification of substantive changes or modifications to this Policy and Supporting Documents shall be communicated to all Associates and Visitor.