



# World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section (WFDYS) CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

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## 1. Organisational overview

The main aim of the **World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section** (WFDYS) is to advocate for the human rights of deaf youth worldwide. This aim is in accordance with that of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) which is a global organisation working to ensure equal rights for 70 million deaf people around the globe. The WFDYS is a section of **World Federation of the Deaf** (WFD) and WFD has a legal responsibility for the WFDYS activities. One of the main responsibilities of the WFDYS is the organisation of camps every four years for children, junior youth and youth. This includes the WFDYS Children Camp for children aged 9 to 12 years, the WFDYS Junior Youth Camp for youth aged 13 to 17 years and the WFDYS Youth Camp for youth aged 18 to 30 years.

The primary goal of WFDYS camps is to empower and educate deaf participants with particular focus on increasing awareness and skills in relation to human rights.

The objectives of the camps are to provide leadership training for deaf youth, support for deaf youth organisations and advocacy, networking, and cultural exchange. This includes leadership, education on human rights to strive for equality and the celebration of linguistic and cultural identity.

## 2. Policy Statement

Child and Youth safety is of the highest priority at WFDYS camps. The WFDYS is committed to child and youth protection and the safeguarding of children and youth. We have zero tolerance towards any form of child/youth abuse, inclusive of physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect, and are committed to work in a way that keeps child and youth protection and safeguarding at the centre of our practices and procedures.

The protection of children and youth in our care is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers at the camps. The WFDYS has a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and youth from harm and to ensure any concerns or incidents, whether actual or suspected, are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Equally, the WFDYS recognises that there can be emotional and practical difficulties for those involved to report abuse and for adults to take action, and appropriate support will be given.

The WFD Board ratified this policy on 13 December 2017 with implementation effective immediately.

## 3. Definitions

3.1 **Child abuse** refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be categorised as physical, sexual, emotional or neglect.

3.2 **Physical abuse** is deliberately causing physical harm to a child. This might involve punching, kicking, biting, burning, scalding, shaking, throwing or beating with objects such as belts, whips, or sticks. It also includes poisoning, giving a child alcohol or illegal drugs, drowning or suffocation. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child.

3.3 **Emotional abuse** is where repeated verbal threats, criticism, ridicule, shouting, lack of love and affection causes a severe adverse effect on a child's emotional development. It includes conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Emotional abuse may include not giving a child, opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from taking part in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children and youth, or it may occur alone.

3.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or youth to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative sex, oral sex, masturbation, kissing, rubbing, or touching outside of clothing, or it may involve non-contact activities such as involving children in watching sexual activities, producing or looking at sexual images, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Abusers can be men, women or other children.

3.5 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child or youth's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect is when a parent or carer fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), medical care, or protection from physical and emotional harm or danger. It also includes failure to provide a child with an accessible language resulting in linguistic deprivation and to ensure access to education or to look after a child or youth because the carer is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

3.6 **Child** is a young human being below the age of puberty.

3.7 **Youth** is a young person aged between 13 and 30 years.

## 4. Responsibilities and Delegations

4.1 **WFDYS Board Members** will:

- have no criminal convictions in the following areas: acts of sexual indecency, sexual offences, homicide, killing, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery, narcotics offences or crimes of an equivalent grave nature and be able to produce government sanctioned evidence to this effect. Government sanctioned evidence must be able to be produced to this effect. The WFDYS President will review this evidence and confirm each adult's clearance for the camp. The WFDYS President in conjunction with the Camp Organising Committee (COC) chair will write to each adult, confirming their participation at the camp.
- be responsible for ensuring appropriate policies and practices are in place to minimise the risk of child and youth abuse, and for appropriately responding to suspected allegations.
- be required to understand and act in line with this policy including reporting any suspected child and youth abuse to authorities as appropriate.
- be responsible, together with the COC, for circulation of this policy and training (including education in regard to this policy) for Camp staff and volunteers prior to the camp at which they will be involved and that emotional support (in the event of an incident) is provided during the camp. The WFDYS will appoint one of the WFDYS Board members as having responsibility for child and youth protection at each camp. This person must have participated in child protection training prior to the

camp. The person will be responsible for overseeing the protection of children and youth at the campsite and ensuring that every WFDYS and COC member follows this policy.

**4.2 Youth Ordinary Members** (where applicable) will:

- comply with the Guideline on the Selection of Camp Leaders (refer to Appendix 5.1).
- accept full responsibility for the conduct of their country's Camp Leader and camp participants whilst at the camp. This will be confirmed through signing the "Acceptance of responsibility for the camp leader and camp participants by the relevant Youth Ordinary Member" form (refer to Appendix 5.2).
- ensure that both the relevant Camp Leader and camp participants have sufficient travel insurance which covers the period of travel to and from the camp.

**4.3 Camp Organising Committee members** will:

- have no criminal convictions in the following areas: acts of sexual indecency, sexual offences, homicide, killing, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery, narcotics offences or crimes of an equivalent grave nature and be able to produce government sanctioned evidence to this effect.
- organise in conjunction with WFDYS Board Members, training from a person with skills and experience in safeguarding children and youth.
- be accountable to the WFDYS Board members for ensuring that appropriate policies and practices in relation to child and youth protection are implemented and monitored during camps.
- be familiar with the Reporting Guidelines (refer to Appendix 5.3).

**4.4 Country Camp Leaders** will:

- have no criminal convictions in the following areas: acts of sexual indecency, sexual offences, homicide, killing, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery, narcotics offences or crimes of an equivalent grave nature and be able to produce government sanctioned evidence to this effect.
- be given information in advance of the camp from the country Youth Ordinary Member, which will be provided by WFDYS in the first instance, on detecting and reporting abuse.
- sign a document "Safeguard Acknowledgement" (refer to Appendix 5.4) confirming understanding of the WFDYS Child and Youth Protection policy.
- be familiar with the Reporting Guidelines (refer to Appendix 5.3).

**4.5 On-site staff and volunteers** will:

- have no criminal convictions in the following areas: acts of sexual indecency, sexual offences, homicide, killing, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery, narcotics offences or crimes of an equivalent grave nature and be able to produce government sanctioned evidence to this effect.
- be alert to the basic signs of abuse, be it physical, emotional, sexual abuse and/or neglect.
- know that any concerns or suspicions about the abuse of a child or youth at the camp must be referred to the WFDYS Board member designated as having responsibility for child and youth protection at the camp for action who will then decide what (if any) further action is required. Possible action may include but not be limited to removing the suspected offender from the situation immediately (this may mean ultimately expelling the offender from the campsite) and ensuring the safety and security of the child or youth, contacting the police and/or preparing an incident report as soon as possible.
- be made aware of procedures regarding confidentiality and for sharing and receiving information including the need for clear recording of any conversations including dates and any action taken.
- be familiar with the Reporting Guidelines (refer to Appendix 5.3).
- follow best practice when working with or near to children and youth at the camp. This includes:
  - avoiding derogatory comments and being non-judgmental
  - using positive comments and feedback whenever possible
  - keeping physical contact to a minimum unless absolutely necessary. When contact is necessary, there must be at least one other adult present.
  - treating all children and youth equally and avoiding favouritism.

## 5. Appendices

- 5.1 Guideline on Selection of Camp leaders
- 5.2 Acceptance of responsibility by for the camp leader and camp participants by the relevant Youth Ordinary Member
- 5.3 Reporting Guidelines
- 5.4 Safeguard Acknowledgment

## Appendix 5.1 Guideline on Selection of Camp leaders

Verification of the following information should be determined through face to face/Skype interview with questions asked about each of the Requirements. The interviewer needs to ensure that all boxes are ticked prior to confirming selection of any Camp Leader.

Each candidate should provide two references (video or written) prior to the interview covering the items below which are asterisked (\*) for consideration by the selection panel.

### Requirements

- Experience in working with children or youth\*
- No prior, current or pending criminal convictions
- Appropriate age to be a leader
- Respect for other cultures and customs\*
- Patience while dealing with child or youth\*
- Knowledge of Deaf Community
- Knowledge of current issues affecting deaf children or youth\*
- Knowledge of International Sign
- Ability to be a positive role model to child or youth\*
- Ability to use own initiative to engage and motivate children or youth\*
- Willingness to undergo relevant training in child protection

I confirm that I am satisfied that the candidate meets all the above Requirements.

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

YOM: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile No: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

If you have any questions, please contact the COC.

## Appendix 5.2 Acceptance of responsibility for the camp leader and camp participants by the relevant Youth Ordinary Member

By signing this document, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Youth Ordinary Member (YOM)) confirms:

- Compliance with the Guideline on the Selection of Camp Leaders
- Acceptance of full responsibility for the conduct of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of country) Camp Leader and camp participants whilst at the WFDYS camp.
- Understanding that if any issues arise during the WFDYS Camp which involves either the country's Camp Leader and/or camp participants, the YOM will take the appropriate action to resolve the situation. This may include incurring expenditure.

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

YOM: \_\_\_\_\_

Full name of representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile No: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix 5.3 Reporting Guidelines

If an incident occurs, this procedure should be followed:

- Ensure the physical safety of the victim. If it is a sexual assault, determine if the alleged offender is still nearby and if the victim wants or needs protection. If the offender is nearby and the victim needs or wants protection, immediately notify local emergency services
- Remain calm
- Try not to show signs of panic or that you are shocked or upset.
- Ensure that the victim is attended to as a priority. Support and “listen” to the victim in an engaged way, and in a safe space that is private and not visible to others. Do not ask for details of the incident. Do not ask the victim “why” questions. Only ask for clarification if you are unclear
  - Support needs to be focused on the immediate safety of the victim.
  - Ask the child or youth if they want a support person to be present whilst they describe what happened. Respect this choice/decision and arrange for the person chosen (as appropriate) to attend
  - Allow the child or youth to sign in their “mother tongue” if they are more comfortable and/or their knowledge of International Sign is limited
- Do not video record the conversation
- Make it clear that you are taking this seriously and that you believe what they are saying
- Reassure the child or youth that they are brave and will not be blamed
- Do not give assurances of confidentiality
- Do not promise to keep the incident a secret
- Do not make any comments about the alleged offender. Explain that you will need to pass this information on but only on a need to know basis
- Let the child or youth know what will be done next, who must be told and why
- Immediately report to the WFDYS person responsible for child and/or youth protection at camps
- If a sexual assault is suspected or has occurred, empathically advise the victim of the desirability of preserving evidence (e.g. by not bathing, showering, having anything by mouth, or washing garments) while waiting for the arrival of the Police.
- Identify where the incident took place. Secure the area/office/accommodation and do not allow anybody access to the area until police arrive.
- If the police are called, remain with the victim until police arrive. The victim may ask you to remain after the police arrive.
- WFDYS and the COC will organise and provide assistance in transporting the victim and their support person (as applicable) to hospital if needed.
- WFDYS and the COC will co-ordinate interpreting at the hospital or for any interviews with authorities.
- All individuals involved must safeguard the alleged offender’s right to a full and impartial investigation by ensuring confidentiality of names and discouraging any discussion regarding incidents, except on a strictly “need to know” basis;
- All individuals involved must cooperate with police and/or misconduct investigations and processes.
- The Report Form (refer to next page) needs to be completed as soon as possible but not whilst the victim is in sight.
- Seek support for yourself if needed.



## Report Form

### Date and time of incident

### Details of the incident provided by the child or youth

### Details of any changes in the appearance of the child or youth such as injuries etc

### Action taken

### Outcome

- Report to WFDYS Board member responsible for child and/or youth protection
- Report to WFDYS President and COC Chair
- Emergency meeting to decide next step
- Child or youth safe
- Contact parents/guardians of the child or youth
- Contact YOM
- Contact WFD
- Contact Police
- Meeting with alleged offender
- Removal of alleged offender

## Appendix 5.4 Safeguard Acknowledgment



I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your full name) will comply with the WFDYS Child and Youth Protection policy and will report any activity that breaches a child/youth's safety immediately. I will ensure that each child/youth is safe while they are under my care.

Please tick each statement to indicate your understanding and agreement:



It is my responsibility to understand and adhere to the expectations of my role at the camp and to behave appropriately in line with being a role model for deaf children/youth.

If I breach any condition of the WFDYS Child and Youth Protection policy, I will be removed from the campsite immediately and the local police may be contacted.

My removal from the campsite and the travel to the airport/home will be at my own expense.

If I am removed from the campsite, all my responsibilities will be passed over to the Camp Organising Committee chair or WFDYS President.

I am not to contact anyone from the campsite after I have been removed.

I agree to maintain confidentiality if I am removed from the campsite.

I must sign this document before I can be part of the \_\_\_\_\_ camp.  
(title of the specific WFDYS camp)

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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