

# Plan policy

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## Global Code Of Conduct

Functional Area:	Human Resources and Organisational Development
Owner:	CEO Plan
Approved by:	CEO
Date of Approval:	
Date of next review:	2015
Language:	English, Spanish and French and local languages
Applicable to:	All Staff (paid staff of any part of Plan the field; National Organisations and International Headquarters) and Plan Consultants, contractors and Volunteers
Related policies:	Child Protection Policy, Disciplinary, Whistleblowing, Conflict of Interest, Fraud policy
Contact:	Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

# Global Code of Conduct

## Principles

Plan is a not-for-profit organisation that has been entrusted with funds by individual donors, sponsors and grant-giving agencies to support Plan's work in 50 countries where it reaches out into rural and urban populations to make a difference to some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. Recognising our accountability to all of our stakeholders we strive for effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency in everything we do.

This Code of Conduct applies to all Plan staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors who are expected to demonstrate full commitment to Plan's values and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role. In particular, their actions and relationships with children and vulnerable adults must fully align with Plan's values, policies and standards and in particular Plan's Child Protection Policy and Standards.

Plan's Whistle Blowing Policy forms an attachment to the Code of Conduct. The Whistle Blowing Policy has been designed to enable Plan staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors to raise legitimate concerns about violations of the Code of Conduct without fear of recrimination.

## Scope of the Code

The Code applies to all staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors who will be required to sign an acknowledgement to show that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct and supporting documents.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this policy,

- **Staff** refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of the Plan International Inc, group including all Country Office staff, Regional Offices and International Headquarters, and staff of Plan National Organisations.
- **Consultants, Contractors** refers to **people** who are not Plan staff but who receive payment for services provided to any part of Plan.
- A **Volunteer** refers to any person providing non-salaried work in the service of Plan's business benefits at any part of the organization, whether in the service of child sponsorship at community level, in Plan offices, as a Board member or any other type of activity.

## Plan's Values

We will always act in the best interests of the child.

We respect child rights and human rights and we believe in everyone's innate and inalienable dignity as human beings regardless of age, gender, race, colour, ethnicity, religion, class, nationality, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

We are ethical, honest and transparent and place a high value on integrity.

We create conditions in our work, in our activities and in our organisation for personal empowerment, especially of children and the most marginalised.

We acknowledge that we cannot solve problems of poverty alone but only through teamwork and mutual partnerships.

We are accountable to all of our stakeholders in communication, finances, performance measures and results, and strive for effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency in everything we do. We adhere to recognised international standards.

We strive for continuous learning and improvement. We listen to new ideas and encourage entrepreneurial activities, innovation, creativity and change.

[agreed by International Executive Team 2007]

### I will respect others:

I will:

- respect the rights of all people without discrimination.
- always act fairly and honestly and will treat people with dignity and respect.
- maintain Plan's professional reputation, upholding and complying with Plan's values, policies and standards.

### I will work to protect children:

I will:

- adhere to the Child Protection Policy and be open and honest in my dealings with children, their families and communities participating in Plan's programs, donors and all Plan employees.
- **in addition** to my responsibilities listed in the Child Protection Policy, ensure that my behavior is compliant with the Child Protection Policy in the following ways.

I will not:

- engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence/excuse based on the unintended harm. [UN Secretary General's Bulletin of 2003 'Special Measures for Protection From Sexual Exploitation and Abuse' which Plan endorsed in September].
- use language or behave towards a child in a way that is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.
- have a child/children with whom I am in contact in a work related context, stay overnight at my home or any other personal residential location.
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom I am in contact in a work related context.
- do things of a personal nature for children, with whom I am in contact in a work related context, [e.g., taking a child to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get undressed etc] that they can do for themselves.
- spend time alone away from others with children with whom I am in contact in a work related context; I will always make sure that another adult is with me and/ or I am with the child in a public place where others are around.
- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.

- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- discriminate against, show differential treatment to, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- develop relationships with, engage in any practice with or develop behaviour towards children which could in any way be deemed or interpreted as exploitive or abusive.
- condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- hire children as 'domestic/house help' or engage in any form of commercial exploitation of a child or child labour that undermines the child's rights or physical integrity.
- use any computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras or any such medium to exploit or harass children.
- access child abuse images by any means.

I will maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct while working for Plan which is not motivated by political or religious affiliation:

I will:

- ensure that my behaviour does not jeopardise Plan's neutrality.
- be open and honest in dealings with Plan, and not pursue personal or family gain or advantage in such dealings.
- in so far as local law permits, I will declare any criminal convictions or any criminal charges against me.
- adhere to any professional code of conduct applicable to my role and profession.
- ensure the proper use of Plan's resources (see Fraud policy for further details).

I will not:

- accept bribes or gifts or favours of financial values which are offered as a result of my employment with Plan.
- enter into any business relationship on behalf of Plan without authorization from my line manager.
- behave in a way which creates unnecessary risk to my security or the security of others.
- use Plan's computer equipment, mobile phones, video and digital cameras for the purpose of exploitation or harassment.

Sexual relationships with beneficiaries who are over the age of 18 are strongly discouraged as relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of Plan's work and are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.

I will report any concern or incident relating to this Code of Conduct where I develop concerns or suspicions regarding breaches of this code.

I will:

- Initiate a report at the earliest opportunity in line with the provisions of Plan's Whistle Blowing Policy and Plan channels for reporting Child Protection Issues as identified in local reporting procedures.
- Be available as a witness in any applicable investigation.

I will not:

- withhold any relevant information.
- undertake any action on my own that is not in line with local policies and procedures and/or, without guidance from relevant focal points and managers.

## Personal Conduct Outside Work

Plan does not dictate the belief and value systems by which Plan staff, associates and visitors conduct their personal lives however actions taken by them that are seen to contradict this policy out of working hours are considered as a violation of the policy.

Plan Staff, Associates and Visitors are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work. Be aware that where concerns exist about the conduct of staff, associates and visitors in relation to child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy either: by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which they work; and/or by Plan in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary action for staff.

## Implementation and Monitoring of the code

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the code. This code of conduct forms part of staff contracts of employment, and volunteer/consultancy/contractor agreements. Failure to adhere to it could result in your employment, agreements, or engagement with Plan being terminated and or criminal prosecution.

Plan will:

- take all concerns and reports seriously at all levels.
- investigate and act on reports immediately.
- take appropriate legal or other action against anyone making a false and/or malicious accusation.

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# Whistle Blowing Policy

## (Attachment to Code of Conduct)

### 1. What is the purpose of this policy?

1.1 This policy covers the steps to take when you feel you have identified or observed conduct in the organisation that contravenes the Code of Conduct.

### 2. Why does Plan have a Whistle Blowing Policy?

2.1 This policy provides a recognised means of raising concerns internally within the organisation. As Plan staff and associates, we are usually the first to be aware of any malpractice, fraud, negligence, or illegality and we must be able to raise legitimate issues in an open and honest way without fear. Open communications, rather than anonymous letters, are more likely to be taken seriously; can be acted on more rapidly and will therefore produce more effective results.

2.2 The Whistle Blowing Policy draws particular attention to Plan's policies on Child Protection, and Fraud and Malpractice as follows:

#### **Child Protection**

2.3 As an indication of what we consider might be raised through the Whistle Blowing Policy, Plan's definition of child abuse as set out in the global Child Protection Policy is:

- Sexual abuse or other physical or mental harm deliberately caused to a child. A *child* means every human being below the age of eighteen years.

2.4 It is important that you refer to the Global Child Protection Policy and the related country/regional guidelines and procedures for more information.

#### **Fraud and Malpractice**

2.5 It is also important to emphasise in this document that Plan has a policy of zero tolerance towards fraud. We want to ensure that Plan's reputation as a quality organisation is maintained and that the maximum possible funds are used to the benefit of the children, families and communities with whom we work.

2.6 As an indication of what we consider might be raised through the policy, Plan's definition of fraud as set out in the Field Operations Book is:

- An action or an intentional omission, coupled with an element of deception, that enables someone to receive benefit directly or indirectly whether financial or non-financial at the expense of Plan or others involved with Plan.

2.7 Malpractice is considered to be:

- Any other intentional contravention of the Code of Conduct or the Conflict of Interest Policy.

### **3. Procedure**

3.1 If you believe, in good faith, that you have uncovered or observed evidence that indicates child abuse, fraud, malpractice or any other breach of the Code of Conduct, you are expected to report it, with the supporting factual evidence to:

- Your Country Director or, if you believe your Country Director is involved or implicated in any way, your Regional Director (if you are in IH this should be to your Departmental Director) or the National Director. In cases of alleged child abuse, you shall report these in the first instance to the designated Child Protection Officer in your Country/Region, who will advise the Country or Regional Director.

3.2 If you consider that your concern may not be taken seriously through this route, you may, alternatively go outside the line management structure and raise your concern with the Director of Audit or the Director of Human Resources.

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome he can present an appeal for final decision to the next level of management
- Associates can voice their concern through the above channels or via the 'Contact us' link on [www.plan-international.org](http://www.plan-international.org).
- Complaints can be made on behalf of affected parties where necessary, but only with the affected parties proven consent

3.3 Confidentiality is assumed unless you agree that your identity may be revealed. In respect of allegations of child abuse, it is important to remember that the best interests of the child are paramount. A breach of confidentiality could have devastating effects on the life of a child and the child's family.

## **4. Action to be taken**

4.1 All concerns raised under this policy will be dealt with promptly and will be treated seriously and sensitively.

4.2 Your concerns will be discussed with you in order to help determine the precise action to be taken. It will be for the manager with whom you have raised the concern to decide whether or not to involve other parties to investigate (e.g. where there is an issue of alleged child abuse or fraud, an investigation must be carried out. Please see the Child Protection Policy and related local guidelines and procedures, and the Field Operations Book respectively for further detail).

4.3 Whenever possible, resolution will be reached and the outcome known within 28 days of raising the concern. You will be informed of the action taken and the outcome.

4.4 If you have raised a legitimate concern in good faith and an investigation finds the concern to be unfounded no action will be taken against you for 'whistle blowing'.

## **5. Penalties**

5.1 Anyone who victimises an employee for raising a legitimate concern or tries to deter someone from raising a legitimate concern will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **6. Retaliation**

6.1 Retaliation is defined as any direct or indirect detrimental action recommended, threatened, or taken towards an individual who has reported a complaint under the whistle blowing policy.

6.2 Plan will not accept any retaliation against person(s) who have made complaints under this policy.

6.3 Plan will take appropriate measures to ensure that the effects of retaliation are reversed.

6.4 Plan will enforce mandatory discipline against staff members and associates where retaliation is proven to have taken place.

6.5 Anyone who makes false and malicious accusations or who raises concerns for personal gain will also be the subject of disciplinary action.

## **7. Leadership.**

7.1 Responsibility for overseeing compliance with this policy is with the Chief Executive Office.