

	Policy Family PROGRAMMES
	Policy Name Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy
Effective Date September 2025	Approved By HFH New Zealand Board of Directors
Scope This policy applies to Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and Affiliates.	

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Policy introduction

In accordance with its foundational mission principles, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand (HFHNZ) is committed to the highest ethical standards and opposes all forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse. Our intent is to create and maintain a work and life environment that is safe, productive and respectful for our colleagues and for all we serve.

This Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy — also referred to herein as the “safeguarding policy” or the “policy” — reflects our pledge to create and maintain a work and life environment that is safe, productive and respectful for the children and adults we serve. As a Christian organisation rooted in undoing policies and practices embedded within institutions, organizations or society that prevent people from accessing opportunities and promoting housing equity, we believe that every child and adult with whom we have contact, whether intentional or incidental, has the right to be protected from any harm that can arise during our operations or project activities. Moreover, we recognize the unique vulnerabilities of children and at-risk adults living in fragile contexts and remain steadfast in our commitment to be a safe organization for all whom we serve or with whom we have contact.

This policy defines Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliates’ approach to creating safe, healthy workplace, operational and project environments in the context of safeguarding. The accompanying Child and Adult Safeguarding Procedures document — also referred to as the “safeguarding procedures” — provides guidance on how operational and project teams can make this policy actionable and adapt practices for the contextual needs and risks associated with the project and/or community. The directives contained in this policy, unless specified otherwise, are intended to apply to the conduct of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand’s representatives, as defined in Appendix A.

This policy applies to Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliates. Throughout the policy, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives should be read to include representatives of both Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliates.

Policy framework

We recognize that building and sustaining a safe organization requires a commitment to children, families who partner with Habitat, community members, partners and our colleagues. This policy establishes our commitment to children, at-risk adults in communities where we operate, and our staff and volunteers by referencing and acknowledging the role of other policies in reinforcing Habitat for Humanity New Zealand’s responsibility to create and maintain operational, programmatic and workplace environments that are safe, mission driven and healthy for everyone. Our Safeguarding Policy Framework organizes safeguarding-related policies, procedures and materials in a way that is accessible and user-friendly. This framework includes but is not limited to the following policies and materials:

1. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy
2. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Child Protection Policy
3. HFHI Ethics Covenant
4. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Harassment, Bullying, & Discrimination Policy

5. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Whistleblower Policy
6. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Background Screening Policy
7. HFHNZ Volunteer Code of Conduct
8. HFHI Safeguarding Self-Assessment
9. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safe Recruitment Toolkit
10. HFHI Safer Programming Guidance Note
11. HFHI HFH Survivor Support Framework
12. Affiliates Staff Handbooks

Policy statement

Every person — child or adult — has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We recognize and acknowledge our duty of care — our organizational, collective and individual responsibilities to safeguard children, families who partner with Habitat, program participants, community members with whom we have contact, and our colleagues and volunteers.

This safeguarding policy has been developed as part of our safeguarding framework to reinforce the principles of “do no harm” and gender equality and is part of our risk-based approach to preventing and deterring unintentional or deliberate behaviours, actions or programming by Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliate representatives that create a risk of or result in child and adult abuse; discrimination; sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, or SEAH; and labour exploitation. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliates maintains a zero tolerance approach for any abuse of power.

All concerns, suspicions or known abuses of power must be reported in accordance with reporting protocols. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand’s Whistleblower Policy prohibits retaliation against any reporter acting in good faith, even if the allegation is later unsubstantiated.

We acknowledge that inherently unequal power dynamics exist between Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its Affiliates, and children, families who partner with Habitat, and adults living in the communities where we operate. Housing inequities, disaster responses and community impact projects increase the likelihood of power being abused. Therefore, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand prohibits sexual activity with any program participant, project recipient or community member of a community where HFHNZ is delivering programming.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand also strictly prohibits sexual activity with any person under the age of 18 years old, regardless of the legal age of consent in the country where the child lives or the contact occurs¹. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence. And, during

¹ This policy reflects our commitment to child safeguarding and to maintaining safe environments for all young people involved in our activities. We recognize that in some contexts, teenagers involved in our volunteer activities may form or have consensual peer relationships. This policy is not intended to regulate private behaviour between children that is mutually consensual, consistent with local legislation, occurs outside the scope of our programs, and does not pose a risk of harm. It is instead designed to prohibit any sexual activity, grooming, or facilitation of behaviour that could lead to child sexual abuse within the scope of our organisational activities—particularly where adults, organisational structures, or power dynamics are involved.

the implementation of Habitat's activities, sexual activity and relationships between and among staff members and volunteers who meet through Habitat for Humanity New Zealand activities are strongly discouraged if there are power imbalances between the staff members and volunteers². Volunteers must also restrict relationships with community members, unless they live in and are from the community.

When any abuse of power is reported, we maintain a zero tolerance for inaction approach. This means reports will be treated seriously, triaged and investigated in accordance with the respective Habitat for Humanity New Zealand investigations and disciplinary procedures. All legal actions will be pursued in consultation with the affected person. Where the affected person is a child, the child and the child's parent, legal guardian or caregiver will be consulted, when this does not conflict with the best interests of the child, and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will pursue the necessary legal action to uphold the best interests of the child and comply with the governing local or national laws.

Policy scope

This policy applies to Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand affiliates. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand affiliates representatives must review the policy, complete the Individual Acknowledgment Form, and submit the completed form to the Habitat for Humanity NZ Safeguarding and Child Protection Administrator.

All Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives are required to understand and acknowledge the policy. Alternative formats such as verbal briefings are allowed where necessary, for example for individuals with low levels of literacy. All representatives must comply with this policy. Volunteers are instead required to understand, acknowledge and comply with the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives are responsible for understanding how safeguarding is applicable to their roles and responsibilities and for taking appropriate steps in accordance with this policy and its accompanying procedures to mitigate identified safeguarding risks.

Treating others with dignity and respect is a value that extends beyond working hours. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives are expected to adhere to the Safeguarding Behavioural Commitments during interactions with each other, our partners, families who partner with Habitat, and community members. This policy and its commitments are applicable to both the professional and personal lives of our representatives. Habitat representatives are expected to uphold the organisation's ethical standards at all times, including outside of regular working hours. These standards are defined within Habitat's policies, codes of conduct and

² We understand that consensual relationships may develop in the workplace, and where these are respectful, healthy, and do not involve abuse of power, they are not inherently problematic. To support transparency and uphold a safe working environment, it is recommended that such relationships be disclosed to Human Resources or a supervisor.

safeguarding behavioural commitments which guide appropriate behaviour across all roles and contexts.

Implementation

Safeguarding principles

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand prioritises safety for our colleagues, children, families who partner with Habitat, community members, and our partners. We ask that each Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representative reflect on how they can contribute to a healthy organization and safeguard those with whom they have contact from preventable harm.

1. We will work in community with children and adults to promote and uphold their rights to be protected from harm during our operations and project activities.
2. We will engage children and adults with empathy and treat each person with respect, courtesy and dignity.
3. We recognize the inherently unequal power dynamics between Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and the families and communities we work within and the particular vulnerability to abuses of power that these differentials create. Any abusive, harassing, humiliating, degrading, discriminatory or exploitative behavior demonstrated by our representatives toward any person is unacceptable.
4. We acknowledge the power we hold and the trust that has been given to us. We will not engage in any abuse of power or trust that harms³ children or adults in the community.
5. We believe in creating systems of transparency to build safe and healthy operating environments with the aim of preventing child abuse; SEAH (sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment); discrimination; and labour exploitation.
6. We will continue to evolve our safeguarding practices and engage colleagues with humility and grace as we learn and make adjustments to strengthen our safeguarding systems.

Organisational commitments^{4, 5, 6}

1. We will maintain safe and healthy working environments that prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and promote the implementation of the Safeguarding Behavioural Commitments Acknowledgment (see Appendix C) and Ethics Covenant.

³ This includes any sexual, physical, psychological, spiritual, social, financial or communal harms because of misconduct by a Habitat representative or failure to mitigate risks that lead to harm via safer programming.

⁴ See [Appendix C](#) for the detailed Safeguarding Behavioural Commitments Acknowledgment.

⁵ Commitments 1-6 address protections from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, or PSEAH, as articulated by the [IASC Six Core Principles](#) and adapted for Habitat for Humanity.

⁶ Commitments 7-10 reflect the importance of the safeguarding pillars and additional behavioural prohibitions.

Managers across all levels of the organization have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain a healthy workplace culture and environment

2. We recognize that acts of Sexual Exploitation, sexual Abuse and/or sexual Harassment, constitute acts of serious misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment or contract. This commitment is reflected in our agreements, which include specific provisions regarding SEAH.
3. We prohibit sexual activity, including any direct or indirect contact or **grooming**, with any child (a person under 18 years old) regardless of the age of consent in the country in question⁷. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defence.
4. We prohibit the exchange of money, employment, goods, special considerations or services for sex,⁸ including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This includes any assistance that is due to families who partner with Habitat, programme participants or recipients, or other community members.
5. We prohibit any sexual relationship between a Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representative and any person benefiting from Habitat for Humanity New Zealand projects⁹. We recognize that this type of relationship is improper because it is based on inherently unequal power dynamics, thus undermining the credibility and integrity of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's charitable mission.
6. We will maintain an organizational mandate that if a Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representative has a concern or suspicion about, or knows that any individual or representative has engaged in SEAH or any other safeguarding violations, within the context of a Habitat program/project, they must report their knowledge or concern via the Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line, or HEAL, or another available reporting mechanism immediately or within 24 hours. All concerns reported in other available mechanisms will also be reported via HEAL. Protection concerns (e.g. SEAH or child abuse by non-Habitat personnel) may need to be reported to other channels including local law enforcement, for child protection concerns, please see HFHNZ's Child Protection policy.

⁷ This policy reflects our commitment to child safeguarding and to maintaining safe environments for all young people involved in our activities. We recognize that in some contexts, teenagers involved in our volunteer activities may form or have consensual peer relationships. This policy is not intended to regulate private behaviour between children that is mutually consensual, consistent with local legislation, occurs outside the scope of our programs, and does not pose a risk of harm. It is instead designed to prohibit any sexual activity, grooming, or facilitation of behaviour that could lead to child sexual abuse within the scope of our organisational activities—particularly where adults, organisational structures, or power dynamics are involved.

⁸ Soliciting or paying for sex online or in person, even where sex work or prostitution is legal, is a breach of this policy and will be addressed through investigation and disciplinary procedures.

⁹ We recognize that individuals may interact in various settings connected to Habitat's work, and that some relationships—such as those that predate involvement with Habitat or occur outside the scope of our programs, including those formed in retail environments where no power imbalance or risk of harm is present—may not fall within the intent of this restriction.

7. We prohibit modern slavery or any trafficking of people — children or adults — for procurement of commercial sex acts; commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC); or forced labour.
8. We have zero tolerance for any representative accessing, possessing or circulating pornographic materials or indecent content, images, videos or messages of children or adults using Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's phones, computers, email accounts, electronic distribution lists, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand-paid internet connections, or VPN services. Inappropriate content sent to an individual or group containing explicit language, messages or jokes will not be tolerated.
9. We actively support legal action in cases of substantiated safeguarding misconduct if doing so is consistent with the wishes of the affected person or, where the victim is a child, it is in the best interests of the child.¹⁰ Legal action may include reporting the case to law enforcement, cooperating with criminal investigations, etc.
10. We engage a trauma-informed, person-centered approach to consult with anyone harmed by safeguarding misconduct involving a Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representative. The provision or referrals for care will be made in accordance with the person's wishes. We recognize that children have the right to express their views, and for those views to be considered and reflected in decisions for their care.¹¹
11. We respond to all reports and investigate allegations, as necessary, noting that Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will not investigate abuse against children or criminal abuse against adults (which will be investigated by Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police accordingly), to ensure accountability and administer proportionate discipline in cases of substantiated misconduct, in accordance with New Zealand employment law.

Safeguarding pillars

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand has a commitment to ensure that our operations and programmes are safe for children, families who partner with Habitat, community members, and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives and volunteers. All representatives are prohibited from engaging in any abuse of power. Please note that our Child and Adult Safeguarding Procedures describe activities to make this policy and our commitments actionable.

- **Governance and culture:** We will foster a safeguarding culture to protect children, at-risk adults, community members, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's international downstream partners representatives from harm that may arise during our operations or project activities. As we continuously learn and evolve our safeguarding approaches and systems, we will adopt a structure to support us in the achievement of our safeguarding objectives. Our leadership will remain steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding and prioritization of best practices, accountability and risk management.¹²

¹⁰ Article 3, Section 1 of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

¹¹ Adapted from [United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#).

¹² Safeguarding will be a part of the risk-based approach across all practices, including internal audits.

- **Prevention:** We will implement best practices to reduce the likelihood of safeguarding breaches. We will ensure safeguarding is mainstreamed across all departments and functions and is integrated throughout the project life cycle.
- **Training and awareness:** We will deliver and make accessible the necessary safeguarding training so that all Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives understand their responsibilities for protecting children, adults and community members from foreseeable and preventable safeguarding risks. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives will understand their obligation to contribute to healthy office, operational and program environments. We will ensure families and communities we work with are aware of the Habitat for Humanity International Ethics Covenant.
- **Reporting:** We commit to educating all Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives about their responsibilities for reporting any concerns, suspicions or known safeguarding incidents. We will ensure that safe, confidential and accessible reporting channels are available to representatives, and we will encourage families who partner with Habitat, children, at-risk adults, and community members to share their concerns through the preferred reporting method.
- **Response:** We will act swiftly and with care whenever a safeguarding allegation is reported. We will prioritize the care and needs of any child or adult affected or harmed by misconduct or unsafe programming conditions and consider the wishes of the affected person through consultative decision-making. Trauma-informed practices will be applied to all investigations and case management activities, and disciplinary actions will be consistent and proportionate to any allegation that is substantiated. We will hold all information confidential and share information only when required by established legal, regulatory or donor mandates.

Governance

The Habitat for Humanity New Zealand board of directors and HFHNZ Affiliate boards of directors will exercise oversight to ensure adoption and implementation of the Safeguarding Policy. The Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Group Chief Executive Officer is accountable for prioritizing safeguarding objectives and delivering organization wide communications about this policy and the accompanying procedures. The HFHNZ Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer(s), HFHNZ Group CEO and Affiliate CEOs are accountable for the implementation and management of this policy.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer(s):** This role is responsible for coordinating and championing the mainstreaming of safeguarding, whether at the country, affiliate or program level. Primary responsibilities of focal points include delivering training and ensuring that representatives and community members can access reporting channels.
- **Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Administrators:** This role is responsible for the management and administration of safeguarding and child protection documents and records, for example, safeguarding and child protection training records and criminal history check records.
- **Habitat for Humanity New Zealand human resources/talent development:** This function is responsible for hiring and onboarding candidates, tracking the completion of

mandatory training, managing personnel/disciplinary records, and applying personnel action whenever a safeguarding breach has occurred.

- **Habitat for Humanity New Zealand managers:** These roles are responsible for ensuring that their respective teams mainstream and implement the safeguarding procedures. Managers will ensure that project teams complete safeguarding risk assessments and develop mitigation and monitoring plans that are evaluated throughout the project life cycle. If a manager is told, learns about or witnesses a safeguarding incident, they must ensure that the allegation, including any unsafe programming concern, is reported to HEAL.
- **All Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and affiliates representatives:** Our safeguarding values and principles codify the behaviors to which every representative is expected to understand and conform. All representatives are expected to be able to recognize and be alert for the signs of potential safeguarding misconduct and have an obligation to report any concern, suspicion or known safeguarding breach as outlined in this policy and to cooperate with any subsequent investigation.
- **Habitat for Humanity International's (HFHI's) Governance, Risk Management and Compliance (GRC) team:** The GRC team at HFHI is responsible for providing guidance on safeguarding risk management and managing reported concerns and subsequent investigations in coordination with the global safeguarding director and respective safeguarding adviser.
- **Habitat for Humanity Asia Pacific safeguarding adviser:** This role is responsible for supporting the mainstreaming of the policy and procedures within the Asia Pacific region. The adviser offers technical assistance to ensure implementing teams have the necessary knowledge, tools and materials to integrate safeguarding as needed.
- **Habitat for Humanity International global safeguarding director:** This role is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of HFHI's Child and Adult Safeguarding policy and procedures and for developing global safeguarding objectives to be reflected in the KPIs.
- **Habitat for Humanity International global senior director of safety and security and safeguarding:** This role is responsible for keeping HFHI's senior leadership team apprised of the safeguarding strategy, any needed changes to the policy and procedures, and progress on key performance indicators, or KPIs.

Pillars of safeguarding¹³

Governance and culture

Standard 1: Fostering a culture of safeguarding

- **Policy review:** Our Safeguarding Policy and its procedures will be reviewed at a minimum every four years.
- **Annual review and verification:**¹⁴ Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will complete a safeguarding annual review to acknowledge compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and its procedures. The annual review will use the standards outlined in this policy to inform the annual safeguarding plan. Any gaps that have been identified will be documented in an annual safeguarding plan with assigned roles, responsibilities and timelines to meet the requirements of the standard.
- **Board designation:** Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will designate a safeguarding board representative to enhance the visibility and prioritization of child and adult safeguarding by serving as an advocate within the board and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand. The representative will receive periodic updates on the status of safeguarding within Habitat for Humanity New Zealand. Additionally, the representative will oversee safeguarding improvements, controls and processes and will ensure the board considers safeguarding in its decision-making processes.
- **Safeguarding strategy and personnel:** To drive strategy and ensure implementation of day-to-day safeguarding measures, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer(s) will work with other functions and departments to meet their safeguarding roles and responsibilities.
- **Leadership responsibilities:** Our senior leadership team will ensure that safeguarding is a recurring agenda item for all regularly scheduled meetings and any safeguarding-related discussions or decisions are reflected in meeting minutes.
- **Communications and fundraising guidelines:** The use of photos, videos or storytelling, especially of children and at-risk adults on personal social media accounts, is prohibited, except for the re-sharing of communications material posted by a Habitat for Humanity social media account. In particular, we understand the ethical responsibility to represent children, adults and community members with dignity, respect and resiliency. We will not tolerate imagery or storytelling that reinforces negative stereotypes.

Standard 2: Establishing accountability

- **Personnel:** All Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives will receive and acknowledge the policy and safeguarding behavioural commitments.

¹³ The safeguarding procedures provide guidance on making the safeguarding pillars actionable.

¹⁴ Aligned with the Annual Safety and Security Assessment.

- **HFHNZ and Affiliates:** Will ensure that all representatives understand and fulfil their responsibilities to safeguarding
- **Budgets:** Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will fund operational and resourcing costs for safeguarding personnel and related activities.
- **Key performance indicators (KPIs):** Metrics to evaluate KPIs are critical to support a culture of safeguarding engagement and knowledge and to support decision-making. KPIs will be assessed over time and evolve alongside our safeguarding culture and practice.
- **Board engagement:** The board will play a key role in driving the organisational prioritization of safeguarding. On a regular basis, the board will review the status of safeguarding and make recommendations for improvements, as needed.

Standard 3: Risk management

We embed risk management practices at all levels and ensure these practices are consistently applied, monitored and evaluated.

At Governance and Senior Leadership level, HFHNZ's Risk Management Framework, is supported by our national risk register which reflects that our appetite for safeguarding breaches is very low.

At Programme Level, we are committed to assessing risk through Safeguarding Risk Assessments. Safeguarding Risk Assessments contextualise our safeguarding practice to specific projects so we can reduce the likelihood of child abuse; sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; discrimination; and labor exploitation.

We recognize the active commitment that robust risk assessments demand, and we will support our representatives to apply a risk-based lens throughout the project life cycle, whereby we design, implement, measure and adjust safeguarding practices according to the associated risks.

Our belief in prevention through risk management also applies to our partners and others working on our behalf. We will ensure that risk management obligations are clearly communicated to any organisations or individuals who have contact or communication with Habitat beneficiaries including contractors, vendors, suppliers, consultants and international downstream partners, and we will share safeguarding risks and mitigation plans whenever possible and practical.

Prevention

Standard 4: Safe recruitment

Safe recruitment practices will ensure every relevant candidate is suitable to work with children and at-risk adults. This includes:

- Contextualised job descriptions.
- Notice of safeguarding commitments within job advertisements
- Recruitment of multicultural and gender-balanced teams
- Robust interviewing practices

- Thorough reference checks
- Background record checks, as detailed in HFHNZ's Background Screening Policy

HFHNZ's Child and Adult safeguarding procedures and HFHNZ's Safe Recruitment Toolkit provide guidance for Human Resources and hiring managers.

Standard 5: Safer programming

Safer programming practices reflect Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's commitment to identify risks and prevent safeguarding breaches throughout the project life cycle. All project and program proposals include child and adult safeguarding considerations. During programme design, our teams will ensure that risk assessments, mitigation measures and monitoring plans have been developed in collaboration with regional safeguarding advisers or designated safeguarding focal points, as needed, to ensure a robust and holistic safeguarding assessment at the onset. In addition to the Safer Programming Guidance Note, documents and materials that support our safer programming approach include:

- Project proposals
- Project design
- Budgeting
- Project risk assessments
- People-centered analysis
- Gender analysis
- Safeguarding work plans (for projects)
- Safer programming checklist

Standard 6: Safe partnerships (international programmes)

We will undertake the necessary steps to ensure that international downstream partners undergo a due diligence or partner capacity assessment to the nature and extent of their engagement, to help ensure compliance with minimum safeguarding standards and/or identify areas for capacity building. Partner agreements with international downstream partners include a safeguarding clause outlining required actions and responsibilities for carrying out projects in accordance with Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy or the partner's own policy, whichever offers greater protections to children and adults in fragile contexts. Partners must have a policy that prohibits transactional sex in humanitarian and disaster response settings or where transactional sex is illegal.

Partners are responsible for assuming a risk-based approach to projects, and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will collaborate with partners to identify, mitigate and monitor risks that are likely to arise during the project life cycle.

All international downstream partners agree to train their representatives on safeguarding with a focus on prevention, awareness, reporting and response obligations. The partner can request Habitat for Humanity New Zealand to support in capacity building, wherever needed. Partners may agree to adopt Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's reporting systems or develop their own reporting channels. Regardless of the elected reporting mechanisms, partners must share all suspected or actual safeguarding misconduct connected with Habitat for Humanity New

Zealand-funded activities within 48 hours or two business days. In addition, partners will disclose the findings of all completed investigations on Habitat for Humanity New Zealand-funded activities within five business days of conclusion. The partner report shall include the outcome of the investigation, along with any personnel or organisational action taken to address the misconduct and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Partners must agree to take the necessary action to respond to reported concerns swiftly and with care, exercising recognized standards for delivering supportive care and services, mobilizing an investigation (as needed), taking remedial personnel action, and documenting management responses for all substantiated allegations.

Standard 7: Volunteer management

Volunteers are expected to contribute to safe and healthy project environments. All volunteers, whether children, youth or adults, are prohibited from engaging in behaviours that create *a risk of or actually result in* harm, as outlined in our Volunteer Code of Conduct. All Habitat volunteers are expected to respect the rights of children and adults and to protect them from harm throughout the volunteer commitment. The safeguarding principles and behavioural commitments outlined in this policy apply to volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will carry out background screening of volunteers in line with HFHNZ's Background Screening Policy. Upon selection, all volunteers will complete contextualized safeguarding training, and a supervision plan will be developed for every project involving volunteers, especially when children are present.

Standard 8: Community engagement and child participation

Community engagement is an important part of creating a safeguarding culture that encourages partnership with the community and seeks to include child participation so that projects are child- and adult-focused *and* community-driven. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will ensure that communities — especially children and adults in fragile contexts — understand and exercise their right to be protected against child abuse, discrimination, SEAH, labor exploitation or other forms of harm. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will work strategically with other functions to partner with communities in meaningful and sustainable ways.

We recognize the strength and capabilities of the people we serve and the communities where we operate. We are committed to listening to their voices — individual and collective — to apply their suggestions and feedback and share our power across the continuum of decisions that affect the lives of community members.

Training and awareness

Standard 9: Training and management responsibilities

- **Mandatory training:** Safeguarding induction training, such as Habitat for Humanity's Safeguarding Foundational Course and/or in-person or live online training will be completed by all Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and its affiliates' staff, board members and consultants, within the first 90 days of their engagement and before work on Habitat projects where there will be contact with children or vulnerable adults. These representatives will not be able to work in communities until verification of training has

been completed. The safeguarding induction training will engage representatives so that they are able to prevent, recognize and detect, report, and respond to any concerns, suspicions or known incidents of a child or adult safeguarding breach. Training will be delivered in a form appropriate for the personnel being trained.

- **Volunteers:** For training requirements for volunteers please see Standard 7.
- **Contextualized training:** Project teams, including disaster and emergency response, may be required to engage in contextualized training in addition to the mandatory induction.
- **Refresher training:** Refresher safeguarding training is required every two years for staff, board members as well as other representatives who may have access to children, families, communities or vulnerable adults. Project teams may be required to complete supplemental and/or contextualized safeguarding training more frequently, in accordance with project risks and donor requirements.
- **Managers:** As part of their responsibilities for creating and maintaining a safeguarding environment, managers are responsible for ensuring their team members complete all required training. Managers must also communicate any safeguarding-specific responsibilities that team members have during the life cycle of the project.
- **International downstream partners:** For information related to training for implementing partners, contractors and suppliers, please review [Standard 6](#).
- **Visitors:** All [casual visitors](#) and visiting Habitat for Humanity New Zealand staff members are given a verbal safeguarding briefing before visiting a project site where HFHNZ is delivering/has delivered programming. Whenever possible and according to local practice, visitors will sign the Briefing for Visitors (Annex 1 of the Child and Adult Safeguarding Procedures).

Standard 10: Raising awareness

- **Awareness materials:** Signs or posters will be affixed in all Habitat offices and at work sites with messaging about the “do no harm” principle and information on how to report a safeguarding allegation. Such messages may include “zero tolerance” for child abuse, SEAH, labour exploitation, and other human rights abuses; the right of community members to be protected from such harms; and Habitat’s prohibition against the exchange of services or resources for sex or exploitative labour (e.g., drawing a distinction between sweat equity and forced labour).
- **Availability of information:** Safeguarding information and policies will be available in local languages. Materials will be child-friendly and understandable across a range of cognitive and developmental abilities. Words and concepts used in awareness-raising materials will be adapted to the local context. Communities will have access to information about the safeguarding risks and project benefits associated with Habitat’s work in the community.

Reporting

Standard 11: Reporting procedures and mechanisms

We endeavour to prevent harm through the activities outlined in this policy and its accompanying procedures. We also recognize that in our endeavour to reduce safeguarding incidents from occurring or recurring, our representatives have the responsibility of detecting and reporting concerns, as early as possible, to interrupt harms to children, at-risk adults, community members and our colleagues, whether internal or external to Habitat. All Habitat offices are expected to adopt clear management protocols and procedures on how to manage a safeguarding concern.

- **Responsibility to report:**
 - Incidents/suspected incidents involving Habitat representatives: All Habitat representatives have the responsibility to report *any* suspected or actual safeguarding misconduct by a Habitat for Humanity representative.
 - Incidents/suspected incidents not involving Habitat representatives: All Habitat representatives also have a responsibility to report any observed or suspected child abuse within New Zealand to Oranga Tamariki, and any criminal misconduct within New Zealand to the New Zealand Police, whether or not the abuse or criminal misconduct involves Habitat for Humanity representatives. These incidents do not need to be reported to HFHNZ.
- **Whistleblower Policy:** Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's Whistleblower Policy expressly prohibits retaliation and protects representatives engaged in **good faith reporting** from retaliation or any threat of retaliation by any other Habitat representative. Any person who engages in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. (*Note: Intentional submission of false allegations is a fraudulent activity and will be handled in accordance with Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's policies.*)
- **Failure to report:** We recognize our collective duty to create safe, healthy work and project environments. Failure to timely report a safeguarding concern, suspicion or known incident will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment or contract. Failing to report is a serious breach of this policy and leaves the child, at-risk adult, community member or colleague experiencing the alleged harm vulnerable to further harm without appropriate and timely intervention.
- **Reporting misconduct or unsafe programming:** Any Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representative who receives a safeguarding complaint or who has knowledge or reasonable suspicion of safeguarding misconduct or who knows of any unsafe programming risks must engage the following protocol: must engage the following protocol:
 - **How to report:** If an immediate response is required to ensure the victim's safety, personnel should contact Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police directly, (or the equivalent statutory authority and local police for overseas incidents).

For incidents/suspected incidents involving a Habitat representative, Habitat representatives should inform their direct supervisor of the concern, suspicion,

incident or complaint. If the representative has reason to believe that their direct supervisor may either be involved in the misconduct or has a conflict of interest in connection with it, the reporting party may report to:

- A higher-level supervisor in their reporting line; or
- One of the Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Officers; or
- The Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Group Chief Executive Officer; or
- The global or area office safeguarding officer, a Human Resources Officer, the Governance Risk and Compliance department, the HFHI Internal Audit department; or
- Any other officially recognised channel by Habitat for Humanity New Zealand, for example a Habitat affiliate reporting application.
- The **Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line, or HEAL**

All reported concerns and allegations received by a Safeguarding and Child Protection Administrator, Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer; any manager, supervisor or HR personnel that involve a Habitat representative must be entered into HEAL within 24 hours of notice. All concerns or allegations of child abuse or criminal activity must be reported to Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police (or the equivalent statutory authority for overseas incidents). All PSEAH incidents connected with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) must be reported to MFAT within two working days of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand becoming aware of the incident through email at safeguarding@mfat.govt.nz. All non-compliance with the MFAT SEAH Policy must be reported to MFAT within five working days.

For incidents that do not directly involve a Habitat representative, there is no obligation to report to HFHNZ. However, HFHNZ Safeguarding and Child Protection Officers are available for support, should advice be needed on whether incidents are reportable and next steps to take.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity:** Report a concern anonymously or in name. A representative may choose to report a concern anonymously — in other words, without identifying who they are. When a report is made anonymously, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand has no means for identifying or attributing the source of the information. Whether the reporter wishes to be anonymous or identified, all safeguarding reports are confidential.
- **Timing:** All Habitat for Humanity New Zealand representatives are required to report any safeguarding concern within 24 hours through one of the channels detailed above.

- **Local reporting mechanisms:**¹⁵ Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will ensure that there are project-specific, local reporting mechanisms that are functional and confidential for all children, adults, community members and Habitat for Humanity personnel to access.
- **Report management:** All reported concerns of unsafe programming or alleged safeguarding misconduct should be reported to HEAL, so that GRC can support Habitat for Humanity New Zealand in the response. Habitat for Humanity International's confidential, anonymous reporting hotline and central tracking repository for allegations of serious misconduct made by or against any Habitat stakeholder anywhere in the Habitat for Humanity International network.
- **Reporter's responsibilities:** Because of the sensitivity of safeguarding, anyone reporting a concern ("reporter") must **not** start an investigation on their own or engage in investigation-type activities. Reporters are responsible for reporting information shared with them or events that they heard or witnessed directly but should refrain from gathering evidence or questioning the child, adult or staff member affected by the alleged misconduct or unsafe programming activity. Furthermore, reporters must not inform or question potential witnesses or the person who has allegedly engaged in misconduct.
- **Community feedback loop:** Whenever safe and practical, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will provide feedback to the community about reported safeguarding incidents to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of each concern. Because of confidentiality, it will not be possible to share specific information without the full informed consent of the person affected, including assent from any affected child.
- **External reporting to authorities, donors or the public:** Where required or appropriate because of a contractual, legal or other donor obligation, there are circumstances where it is required or appropriate for Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's and/or Habitat for Humanity International to disclose alleged or confirmed safeguarding misconduct to external parties, such as donors, regulators or other governing bodies. Decisions related to "whether, what and to whom" to report externally under such circumstances will be guided by:
 - Jurisdictional or legal requirements within the country where the alleged incident occurred.
 - Any requirements defined in Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's and/or Habitat for Humanity International contractual commitments to external parties (e.g., reporting requirements based on a grant agreement, etc.).

¹⁵ These reporting protocols do not replace, but instead supplement, the local reporting community-based feedback mechanisms (such as a dedicated local complaint email address, a local hotline, a community suggestion or complaint box, etc.) that Habitat for Humanity New Zealand must also have implemented to receive such concerns directly from children, adults, community members and other external stakeholders. All safeguarding complaints raised through community-based feedback mechanisms must be added to the Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line within 48 hours.

- All concerns or allegations of child abuse or criminal activity occurring must be reported to Oranga Tamariki or the NZ Police respectively (or the equivalent statutory authority for overseas incidents).
- All PSEAH incidents connected with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), i.e. our international programmes, must be reported to MFAT within two working days of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand becoming aware of the incident through email at safeguarding@mfat.govt.nz. All non-compliance with the MFAT SEAH Policy must be reported to MFAT within five working days.

As appropriate to raise awareness and demonstrate public accountability, Habitat for Humanity International (and/or a designated Habitat entity) may voluntarily share information related to allegations of safeguarding misconduct and/or investigations, as guided by the parallel philosophies of transparency (to donors, regulators) and confidentiality (protection of affected parties).

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand may choose to report certain issues to donors or governing bodies where no clear contractual or legal requirement exists but where we determine the disclosure to be in the best interest of the public trust.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will provide the Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's board of directors with routine updates on safeguarding allegations and investigations to facilitate proper oversight.

Response

Standard 12: Responding to reported concerns

In New Zealand, the statutory responsibility to investigate allegations of abuse against children rests with Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police. Criminal allegations of abuse against adults are investigated by the New Zealand Police. No personnel, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Officers or the Group CEO, are permitted or mandated to investigate allegations of abuse against children or criminal abuse against adults.

Regardless of location, if at any time local law enforcement agency has commenced, HFH should not intervene. Law enforcement takes precedent over organisation investigations.

Habitat for Humanity New Zealand handles all safeguarding investigations with due diligence and professional care, with the support of HFHI's Governance, Risk Management and Compliance (GRC), department. The GRC unit is composed of experienced investigators specifically trained in safeguarding investigations, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

- **Investigation procedures:** Our investigation procedures include best practices and established protocols to ensure due process and consistent management of safeguarding allegations. For investigations into allegations of incidents in New Zealand, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will undertake the investigation in accordance with Employment New Zealand guidance: (<https://www.employment.govt.nz/resolving-problems/how-to-resolve-problems/disciplinary-process/investigations>).

- **Trauma-informed practice:** We will engage trauma-informed practices by consulting with any child or adult harmed by alleged misconduct to ensure that their rights and wishes are prioritized and supported.
- **After- and survivor-care referrals:** Any child or adult affected by misconduct (“victim,” “survivor” or “affected child/adult/person”) has the right to receive imminent and extended care to assist in their recovery from harm. Our Safeguarding Survivor Support Services Framework aims to guide all organisations operating under the Habitat for Humanity International network (including Habitat for Humanity New Zealand.) to comply with the expectations to provide appropriate assistance to any child or adult affected by a safeguarding breach. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand, with the support of Habitat for Humanity International, will consult with the affected child or adult to conduct a Safety and Risk Assessment, which will inform the short-, mid- and long-term care needs and risks associated with the delivery of care and/or investigation activities. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will maintain an aftercare directory that will record community-based services where referrals can be made.
- **Communications:** We are committed to communicating with the child or adult affected by the alleged misconduct throughout and upon conclusion of the investigation.
- **Investigations:** Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and/or Habitat for Humanity International will investigate all credible safeguarding concerns, collect evidence, conduct interviews with witnesses, and reach a conclusion based upon the weight of the evidence and applying the workplace standard of proof (e.g., more likely than not to have occurred).
- **Management response:** Final investigation reports will help to inform the necessary management response, action plans and/or application of lessons learned.

Retaliation

We will not tolerate retaliation against any representative who has engaged in a legally protected activity. Protected activities include good faith reporting of a safeguarding allegation, participation in a safeguarding investigation, and reasonably opposing conduct made unlawful by the local laws, legislation or regulations where the misconduct is alleged to have occurred.

Anyone who has engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and in accordance with our disciplinary protocols and in adherence to New Zealand employment law.

Retaliation can take many forms. Adverse actions that *may* indicate retaliation has occurred include but are not limited to:

- Demotion, reassignment, or transfer.
- Termination.
- Salary or benefit reduction.
- Exclusion or being passed over for opportunities.
- Denial of time off, a promotion or a raise.
- An unwarranted negative performance review.

- Harassment.
- Threats.
- Any other form of physical, psychological, social or financial harm.

Any representative who experiences or believes they have experienced retaliation should report it immediately.

Confidentiality

We observe the principle of confidentiality throughout our safeguarding case management processes, and agree to act in a way that ensures confidentiality under New Zealand law, and/or that of the project or programme country as a minimum standard.

Confidential data will be managed in accordance with HFHNZ's Privacy Policy and the New Zealand Privacy Act 2020. Wherever possible, private information will be shared with people who "need to know" and only after analyzing the requirements and use of the information. People who need to know may include specific people in Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and Habitat for Humanity International leadership, GRC/safeguarding investigators, or external parties such as attorneys, law enforcement, courts, regulatory authorities and/or donors. We believe in managing information with confidentiality to:

- Prevent harm that can be caused when information is not shared in an ethical or responsible way.
- Safeguard against the misuse of information.
- Protect the reputation of people and Habitat for Humanity New Zealand.
- Encourage reporting by building trust.

For these reasons, we will protect the identities of all witnesses (e.g., complainants, reporters, respondents and general witnesses) wherever safety issues require and whenever possible in conformity with local laws. Any information that Habitat for Humanity New Zealand or Habitat for Humanity International is required to share will be reviewed by Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's legal team with the support of HFHI's legal and GRC teams before it is released to any external party or authorities. In the case that confidential information must be disclosed, any witness will be informed about how their information is being shared.

Informed consent and assent

We believe that fully informed consent and child assent are critical to promote the rights of children and adults and to dismantle oppressive and exploitative practices to which marginalized and disenfranchised communities have historically been subjected. As we engage children and adults, we are committed to ensuring that they understand the risks and benefits of their participation and the uses of their sensitive data or personally identifiable information.

We will never coerce, require, rush or manipulate any child or adult to consent or assent to any activity. Whenever the activity for which we are seeking consent and assent (e.g., photos for communications or fundraising) is *not required* to receive the service or benefit being offered, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will not withhold or refuse services, programs or access to resources because of the child's or adult's refusal.

Children and adults may rescind informed consent or assent at any time. In any case where consent or assent of a photo, video or story has been revoked, Habitat for Humanity New Zealand will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all such materials are removed from circulation. The child and/or adult will be informed of any limitations involved in retracting materials (e.g., if images, films or stories are archived but searchable news articles, commercials or marketing materials have been released to the public) *at the time that informed consent and assent is given*.

Revision/review history

Date	Explanation
[Date policy adopted]	[Initial policy approved.]
[Date policy reviewed]	[No updates made.]
[Date policy revised]	[Summary of revisions]

Appendix A: Definitions

Abuse of power: When a person uses their position of power, trust or influence to their own advantage, to place another person at a disadvantage, or to harm another person inadvertently or deliberately.

Adult: Any person over the age of 18 (in most countries).

Affected person: Sometimes referred to as the “complainant,” “survivor” or “victim.” The affected person is someone who has experienced the alleged misconduct or harm.

Assent (child): *Child assent* is the process by which a child is consulted about their participation and/or use of sensitive data or PII. Whenever consent is required for a child to participate in a project or for Habitat for Humanity to use their sensitive data or PII, child assent should be obtained contemporaneously to informed consent by their parent, legal guardian or responsible caretaker.

At-risk adult: A person over the age of 18 with a physical, mental or life status that causes particular vulnerability (such as a physical or mental disability), or any adult living in a fragile context that heightens the risk of an abuse of power because of limited access to basic resources, including food, housing, safety or water.

Best interests of the child: Deciding what type of services, actions and orders will best serve a child and who is best suited to take care of a child.

Bullying: A form of aggressive behaviour that occurs in an intentional and repeated manner, causing another person to feel hurt. Bullying can take multiple forms, including spreading rumors, threatening, physical or verbal assault, engaging in insidious practices such as excluding a person from a group, or any other gestures or actions that occur in a less visible manner.

Casual visitor: Any short-term or one-time visitor. The casual visitor may be a nonrepresentative (e.g., donor, Habitat celebrity ambassador, guest) invited to visit a project site or participate in a Habitat-sponsored or Habitat-funded activity.

Child: Any person under the age of 18, regardless of the local legal age of majority or consent.

Child abuse: Any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse; neglect; or exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, well-being, survival, development or dignity by an individual or an institution. It includes but is not limited to any act or failure to act that results in death or serious physical or emotional harm to a child, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child.

Child labour: Exploitive work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and is harmful to their physical, social, psychological and/or mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and that may also interfere with their schooling.

Child rights: International standards memorialized within the [U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) that recognizes the unique vulnerabilities and protections for people under the age of 18. It also upholds the principles of treating all children, without distinction, with dignity and integrity.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC): The sexual abuse or exploitation of a child in return for cash or any other goods or services. Examples of CSEC include child prostitution, child pornography or indecent images, and child sex tourism.

Complainant: Sometimes referred to as the “affected child or adult,” “survivor” or “victim.” The complainant is the person who has experienced the alleged misconduct or harm.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality refers to keeping a person’s or Habitat’s information private or protected.

Contractors and sub-contractors: Organisations or individuals engaged by HFHNZ or affiliates to support with the implementation of programming, for example by providing construction services.

Disaster response: Habitat’s progressing after a disaster or crisis, focusing on both early and long-term recovery.

Discrimination: Unjust or unfair treatment of people based on certain prejudices or characteristics, including an individual’s sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic background, national origin, age, religion, disability, military or veteran status, or other legally protected characteristic.

Emotional abuse: Any isolated or ongoing harm to a child’s or adult’s emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological well-being or development.

Exploitation: The actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power differential or trust for the benefit of the individual leveraging their position, power, privilege or wealth, sometimes through enticement, manipulation, coercion or trickery, to engage a child or adult in labour, domestic servitude, forced criminality or other illegal acts to profit monetarily, socially or politically.

Fragile or emergency contexts: Geographic areas (e.g., communities, regions, countries) where there has been an emergency or destabilisation due to a disturbance in social order or rule of law, or other disrupting event or where there is limited access to basic needs like clean water, food, shelter and safety.

Good faith reporting: The genuine belief that a risk or harm has arisen at the time it was reported.

Grooming: The process in which an adult or older child or youth builds a relationship with a child and/or the child’s caretaker to gain the child’s and caretaker’s trust for the purposes of sexually abusing or exploiting the child. Grooming can happen online or in person and is a gradual process that can sometimes be difficult to detect. Grooming may include but is not limited to:

1. Showing preferential treatment or favour to a child.
2. Giving the child gifts, rewards or special privileges.
3. Removing the child from interactions with their peers or safe adults in their life.
4. Using knowledge of a child’s vulnerability to build a close relationship.
5. Befriending the parents or caretakers who are responsible for protecting the child.
6. Allowing the child access to alcohol or drugs or encouraging illegal activity.

7. Building intimacy through “special” experiences shared only by the child and groomer.

Harm: Any form of abuse, discrimination, exploitation and harassment, or any injury resulting from unsafe programming.

Harassment: Any comment or behaviour that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory or otherwise inappropriate or that fails to respect the dignity of an individual. It can be committed by or against a beneficiary, partner, staff member, official or any other person involved in any way in a Habitat program or operation.

Human rights: International standards, as articulated by the [U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), that recognise and protect the dignity and integrity of every individual without distinction.

Informed consent: The process by which a competent adult is given information about the risks, benefits and use of their information or that of their child so that they can make an informed decision about their participation and/or use of sensitive data or PII.

International downstream partners: Overseas implementing partners that deliver HFHNZ programming, including local NGOs, INGOs etc.

Modern slavery (aka human trafficking or combating trafficking in persons, or TiP): Holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour are to be construed in accordance with Article 4 of the Human Rights Convention, as further defined by the [UK Modern Slavery Act of 2015](#), and the U.S. government clause for [Combating Trafficking in Persons](#).

Neglect: The failure to meet a child’s or adult’s basic physical and/or psychological needs either deliberately or through negligence. This may include but is not limited to failure to prevent harm, inadequate supervision of children, failure to access urgent medical care for a child or adult, exposure to unsafe project environments (e.g., unsafe programming or access to harmful objects or building materials), and/or failure to properly child-proof project environments, as needed.

Personally identifiable information (PII): Any information that can be used on its own or with other information (e.g., triangulation) to identify, contact or locate a single person or group of people (e.g., a Habitat homeowner).

Physical abuse or assault: The non-accidental use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of or actual injury to a child or adult.

Pornography: Any indecent images, videos or content involving the partial or full nudity of any child or adult.

Prostitution: The exchange of money, goods, resources or favours for any sexual act involving direct or indirect contact.

Protection (child or adult): In the humanitarian and development sector, protection is distinct from safeguarding. Protection concerns arise when a person *unaffiliated with Habitat* engages in harmful, abusive, discriminatory, exploitative or harassing behaviours toward a child or adult. For example, a child protection issue can involve the abuse or neglect of a child by their parent,

a relative or another community member. Another example may be an adult from the community who is experiencing domestic violence (e.g., intimate partner, dating or familial violence). This would be considered an *adult protection* concern. In other words, protection issues involve abuses of power or acts of violence, maltreatment or harm toward children and adults by people within their family or community. Protection may necessitate external reporting. Safeguarding advisers should be consulted to determine if external reporting (e.g., law enforcement, child protection, elder services, etc.) is safe and practical within a specific context. It is possible for a protection concern to also be a safeguarding concern (and vice versa), so please speak with a Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer to ensure proper reporting of any concern, suspicion or known incident.

PSEAH: The protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Reporter: Any person who reports a concern, suspicion or known incident, whether anonymously or in name.

Representatives: An individual acting on behalf of Habitat for Humanity, including but not limited to board members, staff members, contractors, interns), volunteers, international downstream partner personnel and consultants, working with/for Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and/or its Affiliates.

Respondent: The person who is responding to an allegation of misconduct, or the person alleged to have engaged in misconduct.

Retaliation: Any negative or adverse action taken against any Habitat representative engaged in a protected activity (e.g., reporting an abuse of power or participating in an investigation).

Safeguarding: The organisational policies, procedures and practices identifying the behavioural expectations and prohibitions to ensure that interactions between Habitat representatives and children, adults, community members, partners and colleagues are safe, and healthy, offering people opportunities to thrive while respecting their unique identities and lived experiences. Safeguarding policies, procedures and practices endeavour to ensure that abuses of power by Habitat representatives are first prevented. When an abuse of power occurs, safeguarding systems ensure that concerns, suspicions and known incidents are reported in a timely manner to allow for an organisational response that interrupts harm, assesses safety, delivers necessary care and services, and addresses misconduct through established protocols.

Sexual abuse: Any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature (including inappropriate touching), whether by force or under unequal power dynamics or otherwise coercive conditions.

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual harassment: Any unwelcome sexual advance, comment, expressed or implied sexual demand, touch, joke, gesture, or any other communication or conduct of a sexual nature (whether verbal, written or visual) that occurs between a Habitat staff member or

representative and any person with whom they interact in their Habitat role. *For further details, see HFHNZ's Policy on Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination.*

Survivor: Sometimes referred to as the “affected person,” “victim” or “complainant.” The survivor is the person who has experienced the alleged misconduct or harm.

Victim: Sometimes referred to as the “affected person,” “survivor” or “complainant.” The victim is the person who has experienced the alleged misconduct or harm.

Youth: Any person between the ages of 15 and 24, as defined by the United Nations for statistical analyses. It is important to note that the term includes people who are defined in this policy as both children and adults. For this reason, any engagement with anyone under the age of 18 must abide by the Safeguarding Policy provisions.

Zero tolerance: The organisational commitment to hold accountable any Habitat representative who engages in harmful, unhealthy or unsafe behaviors with any child, adult, community member, partner and/or colleague.

Zero tolerance for inaction: The organisational commitment to take all credible reportable concerns seriously and ensure proper care and support are provided to any person who has been harmed, abused, discriminated against, exploited and/or harassed.

Appendix B: Related internal policies of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand and external resources

1. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Child Protection Policy
2. HFHI Ethics Covenant
3. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Harassment, Bullying, & Discrimination Policy
4. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Whistleblower Policy
5. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Background Screening Policy
6. HFHNZ Volunteer Code of Conduct
7. HFHI Safeguarding Self-Assessment
8. Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safe Recruitment Toolkit
9. HFHI Safer Programming Guidance Note
10. HFHI HFH Survivor Support Framework
11. Affiliates Staff Handbooks

Appendix C: Individual Acknowledgment

1. Individual Policy Acknowledgment

This Safeguarding Policy describes Habitat for Humanity New Zealand's commitment to preventing and responding to harm caused by physical or sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment, or bullying of Habitat for Humanity representatives, people in the communities we serve (especially vulnerable adults and children), and people whom we partner with.

I acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the requirements contained in the policy and agree that I will follow them.

I further commit to report to **Habitat Ethics and Accountability Line reporting tool ([HEAL](#)) or any other established reporting channel** any suspected safeguarding misconduct and to help to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse; safeguards the rights of beneficiaries, research participants and community members (especially vulnerable adults and children); and promotes the implementation of Habitat for Humanity's Ethics Covenant and Safeguarding Behavioural Commitments Acknowledgment. (*Note: Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.*)

I understand that I should consult with a Habitat for Humanity New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer regarding any questions I have about the application of this policy.

I understand that breaches of this policy including the safeguarding behavioural commitments would be considered gross or serious misconduct and could result in disciplinary action, in line with New Zealand employment law.

Signature

Date received

Name (typed or printed)

2. Safeguarding Behavioural Commitments Acknowledgment

Habitat for Humanity representatives¹⁶ will:

1. Treat all people with respect and dignity.

- ☐ In recognition of the fundamental rights of all people to live and work in environments free from all forms of harm, abuse, discrimination, bullying, exploitation and harassment, **I will** behave with the highest standards of ethics to uphold the safety, dignity and respect of every child, adult, community member, volunteer, partner and colleague with whom I have contact.
- ☐ **I will** engage others with cultural humility¹⁷ and contribute to safe workplace, operational and project environments that celebrate the unique backgrounds, views and experiences of everyone with whom we work , practice fairness, prioritise people-centeredness..
- ☐ **I will** promote healthy communication void of shame, humiliation, belittling, degradation or any form of emotional abuse when engaging with children, adults, community members, volunteers, international downstream partners and colleagues.
- ☐ **I will** engage in conduct consistent with the Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and policies outlined in the Safeguarding Framework.
- ☒ **I will not** abuse or misuse any power, influence, privilege, authority or trust I may hold.
- ☒ **I will not** engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18, regardless of local laws or the age of consent¹⁸. Furthermore, I will not engage in any relationship — sexual or otherwise — that may be exploitative or harmful.
- ☒ **I will not** meet alone with or show preferential treatment to any child. (A minimum of two adults will always be present when interacting with a child.)
- ☒ **I will not** engage in any behaviour, including touching a child or adult, that is or can be interpreted as inappropriate, grooming, harmful or abusive.
- ☒ **I will not** solicit sex¹⁹ or exchange money, employment, goods, special considerations, or services for sex, including sexual favours.

¹⁶ Including but not limited to board members, staff members, contractors, interns, , volunteers, implementing partners and suppliers.

¹⁷ Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection to understand the culture of another person, the influences that have shaped another person, and the willingness to be open to learning about the cultural identity of another without judgment or bias.

¹⁸ This policy reflects our commitment to child safeguarding and to maintaining safe environments for all young people involved in our activities. We recognize that in some contexts, teenagers involved in our volunteer activities may form or have consensual peer relationships. This policy is not intended to regulate private behaviour between children that is mutually consensual, consistent with local legislation, occurs outside the scope of our programs, and does not pose a risk of harm. It is instead designed to prohibit any sexual activity, grooming, or facilitation of behaviour that could lead to child sexual abuse within the scope of our organisational activities—particularly where adults, organisational structures, or power dynamics are involved.

¹⁹ This applies even in jurisdictions where sex work is legal.

- ☒ **I will not** engage in any form of harassment, including comments, jokes, gestures, emails, suggestive looks, that are or could be interpreted as inappropriate, or other behaviours that may create discomfort; be unwelcomed; or otherwise result in a hostile, intimidating or difficult work or project environment.
- ☒ **I will not** exploit the labour of any person for professional or personal benefit or gain and ensure “sweat-equity” projects are clearly explained.
- ☒ **I will not** discriminate against any child, adult, volunteer, partner or colleague.
- ☒ **I will not** provide anything of value (e.g., money, goods, services, etc.) to project participants unless it is part of the project and there is clear communication about its purpose.

2. Protect sensitive data and personally identifiable information, or PII.

- ☐ **I will** exercise care, practice confidentiality, and follow the Data Protection and Retention Policy when working with or managing sensitive data or PII.
- ☐ **I will** obtain informed consent and assent by ensuring that any project participant — child or adult — is informed of risk, benefits and/or requirements in simple language that is easily understood prior to the provision of any service, benefit or use of data.
- ☐ **I will** follow the Communications and Fundraising Guidelines and only use photos, videos or stories depicting children, adults or community members (including families who partner with Habitat) for business purposes.
- ☐ **I will** only use official business channels to communicate with project participants and Habitat representatives and will make those communications available upon request.
- ☒ **I will not** exchange personal contact information or personal social media accounts with project participants (including families who partner with Habitat), child or adult volunteers, or members of the community where we operate.
- ☒ **I will not** make publicly available PII and have been strongly discouraged from sharing photos, videos or stories, especially of children or adults from communities where we operate, through my personal social media accounts.
- ☒ **I will not** use my personal social media accounts, personal mobile phone, or personal email accounts to connect, “friend” or communicate with children or adults from communities where we operate.

3. Report concerns, rumours, suspicions or known safeguarding violations.

- ☐ **I will** report any safeguarding disclosures²⁰, concerns, rumours, suspicions or known incidents within 24 hours or at the earliest time a reporting mechanism is available.
- ☐ **I will** intervene, if safe and possible, to interrupt harmful behaviours.

²⁰ Disclosures include reports from program participants or others who are unfamiliar with, may not have access to, or are not comfortable with directly reporting an allegation to [HEAL](#) or other established Habitat reporting mechanism.

- ☐ **I will** share all known information to ensure a timely response and provide additional information or evidence as requested.
- ☐ **I recognise** that “good faith” reporting is a protected activity and will share concerns even if I don’t have all the information.
- ☒ **I will not** delay in reporting, withhold information, or ignore requests for evidence.
- ☒ **I will not** deter reporting by a program participant, volunteer, partner or colleague.
- ☒ **I will not** retaliate against, treat poorly or engage in harassment toward anyone who has or is believed to have reported a safeguarding incident.
- ☒ **I will not** engage in malicious or “bad faith” reporting.
- ☒ **I will not** investigate a safeguarding matter myself or question individuals who may be involved in the matter.

4. Respond to disclosures with care and cooperate with internal processes.

- ☐ **I will** immediately inform my direct supervisor, affiliate Chief Executives, HFHNZ Group CEO or safeguarding focal point of any imminent harm to a project participant, volunteer, partner or colleague so that the proper support and care can be delivered.
- ☐ **I will** cooperate with any internal or external investigation.
- ☐ **I will** maintain confidentiality and abstain from sharing information related to a reported concern or investigation to which I may be privy.
- ☒ **I will not** ignore any signs of imminent harm, abuse or danger to a project participant, volunteer, partner or colleague.
- ☒ **I will not** coach or otherwise coordinate stories with investigation witnesses.
- ☒ **I will not** retaliate, treat poorly, or engage in harassment towards anyone who is or is suspected to be involved in a safeguarding investigation – whether a complainant, witness, or respondent.
- ☒ **I will not** withhold any information during an investigation.

I acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the safeguarding behavioural commitments and agree that I will follow them.

Signature Date received

Name (typed or printed)