



Born Free Safeguarding Policy: Children and Vulnerable Adults

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Sign off: Board of Trustees

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Contents:

Section 1: Safeguarding Policy

- 1.1 Scope
- 1.2 Purpose
- 1.3 Statement
- 1.4 Code of Conduct
- 1.5 Declaration

Section 2: Safeguarding Supporting Documents

- 2.1 Definitions
- 2.2 Related Documents
- 2.3 Designated Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Team
- 2.4 Legal Frameworks
- 2.5 Safeguarding Complaints Procedures and Record Keeping
- 2.6 Receiving a Report from a Child
- 2.7 Further Safeguarding Complaints Guidance
- 2.8 Visiting Schools
- 2.9 Online Teaching
- 2.10 Working with Vulnerable Adults
- 2.11 DBS/PVG checks
- 2.12 Photography/Filming Protocol and Permission Forms
- 2.13 Incident Report Forms
- 2.14 Reporting Risk Assessment
- 2.15 Policy Exceptions

If you have any general questions about this Policy, please contact a member of the Safeguarding Team:

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Local Safeguarding Officers:

- Phoebe Odhiang, Kenya – phoebe@bornfree.or.ke
- Lemessa Goshu, Ethiopia – lemessa@bornfree.org.uk
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This Policy sits within Born Free's Charity Handbook: Management Policy and Risk Management Portfolio, available to staff through BreatheHR.

Section 1: Safeguarding Policy

1.1 Scope:

This Policy applies to all paid and unpaid staff (including senior and executive managers), the Board of Trustees, volunteers, ambassadors, patrons, students, interns or anyone working on behalf of Born Free either in the UK or overseas – including all contractors engaged through a Born Free Service Agreement – hereafter referred to as Born Free staff and representatives.

All visitors, including but not limited to donors, photographers, event guest speakers and partners, who are likely to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, either in a school, event or community setting, must be made aware of this Policy and should agree to abide by its contents while visiting or engaging with Born Free and its work.

It is noted that Born Free's safeguarding responsibility extends to all beneficiaries, donors, employees, volunteers, visitors and members of the public. However, the scope of this policy is limited to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults specifically.

1.2.1 The purpose of this Policy is:

- 1.2.1 To protect children and vulnerable adults who are directly involved with projects, talks, events or other activities or work undertaken by Born Free staff or representatives, nationally and internationally.
- 1.2.2 To provide Born Free staff and representatives with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding these groups.

1.3 Policy statement:

Born Free defines:

- Children as anyone under the age of 18 years and recognises that all children could be exposed to harm.
- Vulnerable adults as a person aged 18 years or over, who may be in need of additional care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Born Free believes that a child or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind (including physical, psychological and discriminatory). We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults connected with our activities and keep them safe, and we are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

We have a duty to respond, where necessary, to all concerns about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, or the inappropriate behaviour of an adult or a child towards children or vulnerable adults that we come across during the delivery of our work, or that is a direct result of our work or presence in an area, whenever the abuse occurred and whoever the alleged perpetrator is.

Everyone working on behalf of, or representing Born Free, has a responsibility to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in all their contact with Born Free, its personnel, visitors, or projects. To this end they must prioritise the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and must do all they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to abuse and seek advice whenever action is needed.

1.4 Code of conduct:

- 1.4.1 Born Free believes that, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, everyone has a right to equal protection from all types of harm and abuse (including discrimination).
- 1.4.2 All Born Free staff and representatives must consider the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults involved in or coming into contact with Born Free's programmes, fundraising and communications during planning (including content development), implementation and reporting, and ensure all partners are provided with a copy of this Policy.

- 1.4.3 All Born Free staff and representatives must act in accordance with this Policy, both in work and personal time, throughout their employment, volunteering or other role within Born Free, with no exceptions.
- 1.4.4 Born Free has a Policy of zero tolerance relating to any behaviour that may abuse or harm children or vulnerable adults, and any breach of this Policy will result in the enactment of the procedures set out in the Harassment, Bullying & Discrimination and Safeguarding Policy.
- 1.4.5 Born Free staff and representatives must not engage in any form of sexual activity with anyone under the local legal age of consent, or under the age of 16 years (whichever is older). Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence, and any sexual activity with individuals over the local legal age of consent, or 16 years (whichever is older), must be fully, mutually consensual.
- 1.4.6 All Born Free staff and representatives must always prioritise the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and any reports of abuse or other wrongdoing should always be made in a way that is in the best interests of the individual.
- 1.4.7 Born Free staff and representatives must never hold, share or access any material or content that might/might have exposed children or vulnerable adults to harm (e.g. accessing indecent or inappropriate material).
- 1.4.8 Born Free staff and representatives must always act within professional boundaries – ensuring that all contact with children or vulnerable adults is essential to the programme or activity.
- 1.4.9 All Born Free staff and representatives must adhere to the Photography/Filming Protocol (**page 25**) at all times, which includes:
 - a) Gain appropriate informed consent for any photos or videos taken of individuals involved in our work. This should include written personal or parental/guardian consent where required.
 - b) Never take or share, or enable to be taken, inappropriate and/or suggestive, including nude, pictures, or videos of children or vulnerable adults.
 - c) Follow all available guidelines for the correct and secure storage of photos and videos, in line with country specific Data Protection Laws (or UK GDPR, whichever is stronger).
- 1.4.10 Adult specific:
 - 1.4.10.1 Born Free staff and representatives should never have any involvement in managing the financial affairs of vulnerable adults that they come across in the process of their work (this does not preclude activities carried out in line with Born Free's Ethical Fundraising policy).
- 1.4.11 Child specific:
 - 1.4.11.1 Born Free staff and representatives should never make personal or private contact with a child who is engaged with Born Free's work, including by providing personal contact details or contacting them through direct messages on social media.
 - 1.4.11.2 All Born Free staff and representatives communicating with children must always ensure a second adult is present or copied into the communications (e.g. teacher, parent, guardian or member of Born Free staff) or is done in a way that ensures all messages are visible to multiple Born Free staff (in the case of social media).
 - 1.4.11.3 Born Free staff and representatives should never assume sole responsibility for a child or group of children, including within school, transport, or any other setting. Two adults should always be present when working with children.
- 1.4.12 All Born Free staff must abide by the Employee Policy and Procedures Handbook at all times, including but not limited to those policies relating to the use of computer equipment, electronic communications, telephones and vehicles.
- 1.4.13 All Born Free staff and representatives must record and store information professionally and securely in line with GDPR¹, PERC² and other relevant legislation.

¹ UK General Data Protection Regulation

² UK Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations



- 1.4.14 All Born Free staff and representatives are responsible for reading this Policy and relevant related documents, raising any questions that they may have, and must sign the *Declaration of Understanding and Acceptance*.
- 1.4.15 Born Free will ensure that all new staff members receive a copy of this Policy as part of the onboarding process.
- 1.4.16 Born Free will ensure that all staff and representatives are recruited, managed, supervised and, where necessary trained, to enable them to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this document regarding the safeguarding of children involved with Born Free's work, including the provision of a safe physical environment.