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Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment Policy.

Document History

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Introduction

At FAIRACTION International, we recognize the critical importance of establishing a robust policy against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, aligning with ACFID Code 1.5.1. This policy reflects our unwavering commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and dignified environment for all individuals involved in our operations, including staff, volunteers, partners, and the communities we serve.

Our leadership is dedicated to upholding these standards and actively promotes a culture of safety and accountability. We acknowledge that the responsibility to protect individuals from sexual misconduct is a fundamental aspect of our work and mission. This policy is a reaffirmation of our commitment to ethical conduct, respect for human rights, and the promotion of a safe and secure environment for everyone associated with FAIRACTION International.

Standards of Behavior

FAIRACTION International is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behavior among all staff, representatives, and partners. This commitment is foundational to our organizational integrity and the trust we build in our community engagements.

1. **Professional Conduct:** All personnel must adhere to the utmost professional standards in all interactions. This includes maintaining a respectful demeanor, clear communication, and ethical decision-making.
2. **Respectful Interactions:** Our organization values and respects the dignity and rights of every individual. Behavior that undermines this respect, including any forms of discrimination, harassment, or exploitation, is strictly prohibited.
3. **Boundary Awareness:** It is crucial to understand and maintain appropriate professional boundaries. This includes avoiding any relationships or actions that could be perceived as exploitative or abusive.
4. **Zero Tolerance for Misconduct:** We have a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Any such behaviors or actions will be met with disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or contractual relations.
5. **Inclusivity and Equality:** Our organization promotes an inclusive environment where diversity is respected, and equality upheld. We strive to create a space where every individual feels valued, heard, and safe.

Adherence to these standards is non-negotiable and forms the basis of our commitment to creating a secure and positive environment for all. Violations of these standards are taken seriously and will be addressed promptly and thoroughly.

Prohibition of Sexual Misconduct

This policy unequivocally prohibits any form of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. These terms are defined as follows:

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Consequences for Violations:

- Any breach of this policy is considered a serious offense and will result in stringent disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contractual relationships.
- Incidents that constitute criminal acts will be reported to the relevant authorities.
- The policy ensures that all parties involved in an allegation are treated fairly, while prioritizing the protection and dignity of the complainant or survivor.

Policy Implementation

FAIRACTION International commits to the rigorous implementation of this policy through a comprehensive plan that includes widespread dissemination, training, and ongoing awareness programs.

- **Policy Dissemination and Integration:**
 - The policy is distributed across the organization, ensuring all staff, volunteers, and partners are informed.

- Integration into all organizational activities, including field operations and administrative processes.
- **Training and Awareness Programs:**
 - Mandatory training sessions on the policy are conducted for all personnel to ensure understanding and compliance.
 - Regular awareness campaigns and initiatives are held to maintain focus on the importance of this policy.
 - Refresher training courses are provided periodically to keep the information current and top-of-mind.

This step-by-step implementation plan ensures that every member of FAIRACTION International is informed, trained, and committed to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

Reporting Procedures

FAIRACTION International has established a confidential and effective reporting process for incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

- **Confidential Reporting Channels:** We provide multiple channels (like a dedicated email, hotline, and a secure online form) for reporting incidents. This ensures confidentiality and ease of access for all staff and stakeholders. For additional information, see the “Established Reporting Channels for Sexual Misconduct Concerns” section of this policy below.
- **Initial Assessment and Response Protocol:** When a report is received, a designated team conducts an initial assessment to determine the urgency and nature of the response required. Immediate steps are taken to ensure the safety of the complainant. For comprehensive details, please refer to the “Step-by-Step Process for Initial Assessment and Response to Reports of Sexual Misconduct” detailed in the later section of this policy.
- **Investigation Process:** A transparent yet confidential investigation is conducted. The process respects the privacy of all parties involved and ensures fairness. For detailed procedures, please refer to the “Fair

and Transparent Investigation Procedures" section below.

- **Support Mechanisms:** Adequate support, including counselling and legal guidance, is provided to complainants throughout the process.
- **Outcome and Follow-up:** Post-investigation, appropriate actions, including disciplinary measures, are taken based on findings. The complainant is informed about the outcome and any follow-up actions.

These procedures are in place to ensure that all reports of sexual misconduct are handled with sensitivity, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Support Systems

FAIRACTION International's policy ensures robust support systems for complainants and survivors of sexual misconduct:

- **Counseling Services:** If required, we provide access to professional counseling services for emotional and psychological support. This service is confidential and tailored to the needs of each individual.
- **Legal Support:** If required, we offer assistance in accessing legal counsel to ensure complainants and survivors are fully aware of their rights and the legal avenues available to them.
- **Ongoing Support:** We commit to providing ongoing support to affected individuals, including regular follow-ups, to address any long-term impacts and ensure their continued well-being.

These support systems are an integral part of our commitment to the care and recovery of those affected by sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.

Review and Monitoring

FAIRACTION International is committed to the continuous review and monitoring of this policy:

- **Regular Policy Reviews:** The policy is reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with current laws and best practices. This includes seeking feedback from staff and stakeholders.

- **Compliance Monitoring Systems:** We have established systems to monitor compliance with the policy across all levels of the organization. This includes regular audits and reporting mechanisms to track adherence and identify areas for improvement.

Established Reporting Channels for Sexual Misconduct Concerns

This section details the specific and confidential avenues available for reporting incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment within FAIRACTION International, ensuring that all reports are treated with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality.

1. **Dedicated Email:** Stakeholders can directly report incidents via a dedicated email address: report.safeguarding@fairaction.ngo. This email is actively monitored, and messages are automatically forwarded to authorized personnel within the organization, ensuring each report is handled in time and with sensitivity and confidentiality.
2. **24/7 Hotline:** Available at +61 28091 2493 and +234 706 101 8474, this hotline is attended by a responsible person within our senior management capable of managing safeguarding issues. They provide immediate support and initiate the necessary protocols to effectively address reports.
3. **Secure Online Form:** A secure and confidential online reporting form will be made available on our website. This will allow stakeholders to submit reports anonymously if they choose, ensuring privacy while enabling effective communication of concerns.

Communication and Accessibility:

These reporting channels are extensively communicated across the organization and to all stakeholders through:

- **Training Programs:** New staff will receive orientation on using the reporting channels as part of their initial training. Additionally, annual refresher sessions will ensure that all staff members are up to date on the procedures.

- **Information Dissemination:** Information about these channels will be disseminated through our online platforms, project sites, and during community engagement initiatives to ensure easy access and visibility.

Review and Adaptation:

The effectiveness of these reporting channels will be continuously monitored, with regular feedback sought from users to adapt and enhance the mechanisms to better serve our community's needs.

These measures ensure that FAIRACTION International provides a secure and responsive environment for addressing concerns related to sexual misconduct, reflecting our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety and respect within all aspects of our operations.

Step-by-Step Process for Initial Assessment and Response to Reports of Sexual Misconduct

This protocol outlines the steps taken by FAIRACTION International upon receiving a report of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment to ensure a thorough and immediate response. The procedure ensures the safety and support of the complainant while determining the appropriate course of action.

1. Report Reception:

- Step 1: All reports are received via dedicated channels (email, hotline, online form).
- Step 2: The report is logged into a secure and confidential system accessible only to the designated safeguarding team.

2. Immediate Safety Measures:

- Step 3: Assess the immediate safety needs of the complainant. If there is any immediate risk, coordinate with local authorities or emergency services to provide necessary protection or medical care.
- Step 4: Provide the complainant with information on available support services, including counseling and legal assistance.

3. Urgency and Nature Assessment:

- Step 5: Review the details of the report to classify the nature of the incident (exploitation, abuse, harassment) and determine the severity and urgency of the situation.
- Step 6: Identify any need for immediate protective measures to prevent further harm.

4. Assigning Responsibility:

- Step 7: Assign the case to a member of the safeguarding team who will lead the initial assessment and subsequent actions. This individual will be responsible for maintaining communication with the complainant and ensuring a responsive process.

5. Gathering Additional Information:

- Step 8: Where necessary, and without breaching confidentiality, gather additional information from the complainant or witnesses to better understand the context and specifics of the incident.

6. Decision on Initial Response:

- Step 9: Based on the urgency and nature assessment, decide on the initial response, which may include internal investigation, mediation, or immediate disciplinary action against the accused, if within the organization.

7. Documentation and Initial Report:

- Step 10: Document all findings and steps taken during the initial assessment in a confidential report. This report is preliminary and sets the stage for a detailed investigation if required.
- Step 11: Submit the initial report to the designated senior management for review and to determine further action.

8. Feedback to Complainant:

- Step 12: Communicate the initial findings and next steps to the complainant, ensuring they are informed of the process and their options moving forward.

This structured approach ensures that all reports are handled with the utmost seriousness, transparency, and efficiency, providing immediate support to the complainant and laying the groundwork for a thorough investigation and resolution of the issue.

Fair and Transparent Investigation Procedures

FAIRACTION International is committed to handling all complaints of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment with the utmost fairness and transparency. The following steps outline our approach to conducting investigations:

1. Initiation of Investigation:

- Step 1: Upon receipt of a complaint, the designated safeguarding team will initiate an investigation promptly.
- Step 2: The complainant will be informed about the start of the investigation and the expected timelines.

2. Appointment of Investigative Team:

- Step 3: An investigative team, consisting of impartial members trained in handling sensitive issues, will be assembled. This team may include internal staff and, if necessary, external experts to ensure neutrality.

3. Evidence Gathering:

- Step 4: The investigative team will collect all relevant information and evidence. This may include interviews with the complainant, the accused, and any witnesses, as well as reviewing any pertinent documents or communication.
- Step 5: All interviews and data collection processes will be conducted respectfully, maintaining confidentiality to protect all parties involved.

4. Analysis and Deliberation:

- Step 6: The collected evidence will be analyzed impartially by the investigative team.
- Step 7: The team will meet to discuss findings and decide based on the evidence gathered.

5. Drafting of Investigation Report:

- Step 8: A detailed investigation report will be prepared, summarizing the findings, the process followed, and the conclusion reached.
- Step 9: The report will include recommendations for resolving the complaint, which may involve disciplinary actions, mediation, or other appropriate measures.

6. Review and Approval:

- Step 10: The draft report is reviewed by a senior oversight committee to ensure the investigation was thorough and unbiased.
- Step 11: After approval, the final report is shared with the governing body for any further necessary action.

7. Communication of Findings:

- Step 12: The complainant and the accused are informed of the outcome of the investigation. Details of the investigation are kept confidential, and only the relevant conclusions and actions to be taken are disclosed.

8. Implementation of Recommendations:

- Step 13: Any actions recommended by the investigation report are implemented promptly to address the issues raised and to prevent recurrence.

9. Feedback and Review:

- Step 14: Feedback is sought from the complainant on the process to assess satisfaction and gather suggestions for improvement.
- Step 15: The procedures themselves are reviewed periodically to enhance their effectiveness and ensure best practices in safeguarding are followed.

This structured approach ensures that all investigations are carried out with integrity, respecting the rights of all individuals involved and upholding our commitment to justice and accountability.

Documentation and Board-Level Reporting of Investigations

FAIRACTION International ensures transparency and accountability in handling investigations of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment through documentation and systematic reporting to our board. This process is crucial for maintaining organizational integrity and ensuring that all actions taken are in line with our commitment to safeguarding everyone involved in our projects.

1. Investigation Documentation:

- Step 1: All findings from the investigation, including interviews, evidence collected, and analysis, are comprehensively documented in a confidential investigation report.
- Step 2: This report includes a summary of the complaint, a detailed description of the investigative process, findings, and recommended actions.
- Step 3: Care is taken to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of the information, protecting the rights and privacy of all parties involved.

2. Board-Level Reporting:

- Step 4: Upon completion of the investigation, the final report is submitted to the board of directors. This submission includes not only the investigation findings but also any corrective actions

proposed or taken.

- Step 5: The board reviews the investigation report in a scheduled meeting to ensure that the investigation was conducted fairly and thoroughly and that the outcomes align with organizational values and legal requirements.
- Step 6: Decisions made by the board regarding the investigation are recorded in the board meeting minutes as part of the organization's official record.

3. Feedback and Action:

- Step 7: Following board review, feedback is provided to the investigative team and any relevant parties about the board's decisions and any further actions required.
- Step 8: If the board recommends additional measures, such as policy revisions or further disciplinary actions, these are implemented accordingly to prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

4. Ongoing Review and Adaptation:

- Step 9: The documentation and reporting process itself is reviewed periodically to enhance effectiveness and ensure compliance with evolving best practices and legal standards.
- Step 10: Adjustments to the process are made based on feedback from the board, stakeholders, and as part of the organization's commitment to continuous improvement in safeguarding practices.

Global Reporting Responsibilities of FAIRACTION International

FAIRACTION International's commitment to transparency and accountability extends across all regions where it operates. This section outlines our reporting responsibilities in each country, tailored to comply with local laws and our organizational standards.

1. Reporting in Australia:

- **Legal Compliance:** Adhere to Australian legal standards and requirements for reporting sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. This includes compliance with the Commonwealth legislation and state-based statutes.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** Reports of serious incidents must be made to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as required under Australian law.
- **Internal Reporting:** Incidents must also be reported internally according to the procedures outlined in our safeguarding policy, ensuring that all relevant governance bodies within FAIRACTION International are informed.

2. Reporting in Nigeria:

- **Legal Compliance:** Follow Nigerian legal requirements for reporting misconduct, including adherence to the laws enforced by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and other relevant authorities.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** Ensure compliance with Nigerian NGO regulatory frameworks, reporting any serious incidents to local government units and the Corporate Affairs Commission as required.
- **Internal Reporting:** Maintain a consistent reporting process with the headquarters in Australia, ensuring that FAIRACTION Nigeria aligns with the overarching policies of FAIRACTION International.

3. Future International Expansions:

- **Country-Specific Compliance:** Each new country of operation will involve a thorough analysis of local laws and reporting requirements, integrated into FAIRACTION International's safeguarding framework.
- **Adaptation and Training:** Adapt policies and training materials to meet local needs and legal standards, ensuring that all staff and partners are fully informed and compliant.
- **Coordination with Headquarters:** Maintain robust communication lines with FAIRACTION International's headquarters to ensure consistency in

policy implementation and reporting across all locations.

Implementation Strategy:

- **Annual Briefing Sessions via Webinars:**

Annual Webinar: Host a single annual webinar tailored to highlight the key aspects of local child safeguarding laws and cultural practices relevant to each country's operations. This reduces the need for multiple, complex training programs.

Accessible Content: Ensure the webinar content is accessible and concise, providing essential information that staff can easily understand and apply.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of the policy in each country and make adjustments as necessary.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Ensure that clear, accessible reporting mechanisms are in place that respect the local context and are easy for all stakeholders to use.

By setting up these tailored implementation strategies, FAIRACTION ensures that its child safeguarding policies are not only compliant with international standards but also resonate with local needs and legal requirements, thereby enhancing the protection of children across its areas of operation.

Conclusion:

This policy represents our steadfast commitment to creating a safe and respectful environment for all. We pledge to maintain vigilance, adapt to new challenges, and uphold the highest standards of conduct to protect against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.