

# Safeguarding Policy

## Child safeguarding, adult safeguarding and protection from sexual harassment

---

<b>Author</b>	Jule Schnakenberg and Sara Habe
<b>Owner</b>	Marina Edelmann
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Anne Koch, Arnold Putz, Caroline Gusinda, Jens Waltermann, Kathrin Neumann, Megan Sinnott
<b>Approved by</b>	 Jens Waltermann
<b>Date of Approval</b>	25/04/2024
<b>Effective Date</b>	25/04/2024
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Status</b>	New
<b>Type</b>	Policy
<b>Applies to</b>	Foundation and Service GmbH



## Contents

<b>1. Statement</b>	<b>2</b>
Understanding harm and abuse	2
<b>2. Purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Safeguarding Principles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Scope</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. Legal and international parameters</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6. Definitions</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7. Types of Abuse</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8. Related Policies</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9. Choosing Trustees, staff and volunteers</b>	<b>5</b>
Plant-for-the-Planet Responsibilities	6
Management	6
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	6
Plant-for-the-Planet staff members take responsibility to	7
<b>10. Response Measures and Process</b>	<b>8</b>
How to report a safeguarding concern	8
Procedures Investigation	8
Procedure for Allegations of Abuse	8
Due Process Protections for Allegations of Abuse	9
Plant-for-the-Planet Record-Keeping Responsibilities	10
<b>11. Online Event Guidelines</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>12. In-Person Events Guidelines</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>13. General Event and Interaction Guideline</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>14. Process of Reporting</b>	<b>11</b>

## 1. Statement

The Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation as well as the Plant-for-the-Planet Service GmbH, subsequently summarised as Plant-for-the-Planet, believe that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Plant-for-the-Planet will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by anyone, especially not by staff, volunteers or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse within the team. These key areas of safeguarding may have different policies, additional documents and procedures associated with them.

Plant-for-the-Planet commits to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

Safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programs.

### Understanding harm and abuse



## 2. Purpose

Our charitable activities include working with vulnerable people. The purpose of this policy is to protect children, vulnerable adults and the members of our team from harm



when coming in contact with us and each other, and provide stakeholders and the public with the overarching principles that guide our approach in doing so.

This includes harm and abuse arising from:

- The conduct of staff or personnel associated with Plant-for-the-Planet
- The design and implementation of Plant-for-the-Planet's programs and activities
- The dynamics within the team

### 3. Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

- Nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience any form of abuse, harm or exploitation.
- We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries, volunteers and staff, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which all people we are in contact with not only feel safe, but are also able to speak up, if they have any concerns. This is in line with our Code of Conduct, published in July 2023.

### 4. Scope

The policy and the associated documents lay out the commitments made by Plant-for-the-Planet, and inform staff (including governance representatives), volunteers, partners involved in the delivery of our services and activities and associated personnel, participants and guests of their rights and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. It protects our employees, volunteers as well as the people who attend our events, and creates transparency and accountability towards the public. Plant-for-the-Planet will ensure that it has made staff, volunteers, partners and participants appropriately aware of this safeguarding policy.

This policy covers definitions, the preventative measures, the reporting and investigation process and outlines trustee responsibilities.

### 5. Legal and international parameters

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right of all children, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion or nationality, to be protected from sexual abuse, to receive special help if they are abused, to have their opinions heard in any



procedures that affect them under this policy, to receive appropriate information regarding their rights and responsibilities and the available protection under this policy, and to be treated with dignity in all regards.

As a registered entity in Germany, the Bundeskinderschutzgesetz provides further protection for children and young people under German domestic law as well as applicable European laws, namely the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights. It seeks to provide for preventive protection and intervention in case of violations of child protection. It also declares that “everyone has the right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity”.

## 6. Definitions

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their concerns and to ask for help. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice.

**DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead. The person in charge of all reporting related to Safeguarding and the person of trust within the team.

**Preponderance of evidence:** An allegation is supported by a preponderance of evidence if more evidence is found to support the allegation than to dispute the allegation.

**Person of interest:** A person who has made an allegation of abuse, is alleged to have committed this abuse, or is alleged to have suffered this abuse.

**Low-level concern:** A low-level concern is a report describing events which may suggest that an individual is at risk, presents a risk, or is involved in poor safeguarding practices, but which fall short of being a specific allegation.

**Reasonable cause to believe:** A person has reasonable cause to believe a specific allegation if they have specific knowledge which suggests the allegation is true.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse may involve: physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching even if outside of clothing); non-contact activities, such as involving young people in looking at or producing sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a young person in preparation for sexual exploitation – including via the internet.

**Specific allegation:** A specific allegation identifies a certain individual as a claimed abuser or potential abuser, and identifies certain speech, behaviour, or actions claimed to have occurred. The name of any young person involved need not be known for the allegation



to be specific. The identification of concerning speech, behaviour, or actions must be sufficiently concrete, but need not be exact or highly detailed.

**Vulnerable Adult:** A person who is aged 18 or older and is or may be in need of 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. With this term we also refer to persons aged 18 or older who find themselves in a power relation with another person and are therefore in a difficult position when it comes to taking action against harm or abuse by that person.

## 7. Types of Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, sexual or institutional abuse, including neglect and exploitation.

Harm and risks you must be alert to, whether online or in person, include:

- sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation
- discrimination
- criminal exploitation
- bullying
- cyber abuse
- physical or emotional abuse
- extremism and radicalisation

## 8. Related Policies

This policy will need to be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct for Plant-for-the-Planet.

## 9. Choosing Trustees, staff and volunteers

Plant-for-the-Planet:

- Will receive police background checks on all personnel, including but not limited to trustees, employees, program coordinators, academy moderators, volunteers and partners which act on behalf of Plant-for-the-Planet and are in contact with



children or vulnerable beneficiaries. This background checks shall be renewed every 4 years. The DSLs may request an earlier renewal at any time.

- Will distribute the Code of Conduct to all staff and discuss it thoroughly during onboarding. Obligations thereunder are refreshed on a regular basis .
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation.
- Ensure that staff members are aware of their responsibilities to attend training and support staff in accessing training.
- Will receive input and seek to continuously improve this policy and related processes.

## Plant-for-the-Planet Responsibilities

### ■ Management

- Appoints two DSL (one who identifies as female, one who identifies as male, who can each represent the other in all aspects of the role) report directly to them.
- The reporting line shall exclude anyone who is the subject of an allegation.
- Ensures that DSL are properly trained and equipped to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Supports the DSL in all matters of safeguarding and takes final responsibility in respect to the application of these policies and procedures.
- Maintains confidential records of all incidents, decisions, and disclosures related to Safeguarding.

### ■ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Raise awareness of safeguarding to ensure that everyone (staff, and people who are in contact with Plant-for-the-Planet) can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to harm, abuse and neglect.
- Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process.



- Will regularly Inform parents of young people involved in a safeguarding case.
  - Keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and promoting the welfare of children.
  - Understand how diversity, beliefs and values of people who use services may influence the identification, prevention and response to safeguarding concerns.
  - Ensures that the staff is properly trained in handling sensitive and confidential young persons information.
  - Appoints safeguarding contacts of trust for each event organised by Plant-for-the-Planet.
  - Receives all allegations and concerns related to safeguarding.
  - Receives reports of disclosures and determines whether they constitute low-level concerns or specific allegations.
  - Creates a confidential record of each specific allegation of abuse and each low-level concern.
  - Informs the Management of specific allegations of abuse and low-level concerns in a timely manner.
  - Seek permission from the respective adult before sharing information about them with another agency. The safeguarding of a child or an adult who is at risk or if a crime has been committed will override any need for consent (if a child has disclosed or if Plant-for-the-Planet staff has concerns about a child, and the Designated Safeguarding Leads judge that a referral to Social Care is needed, they will inform the child that they need to tell someone else but will not need to gain consent).
- **Plant-for-the-Planet staff members take responsibility to**
- Follow the safeguarding policy and procedures at all times, particularly if concerns arise about the safety or welfare of an adult at risk or a child.
  - Remain alert at all times to the possibility of abuse.



- Participate in regular safeguarding training and maintain current working knowledge of safeguarding.

## 10. Response Measures and Process

Plant-for-the-Planet will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, the ombudsperson and official bodies.

### How to report a safeguarding concern

Children, young people and adults participating in Plant-for-the-Planet related events should report any complaint or concern relating to safeguarding to one of the persons designated beforehand for that particular event.

Staff members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). If the staff member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) (for example if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to management directly.

If a crime is in progress, or if an individual is in immediate danger, the police should be called directly.

### Procedures Investigation

#### ■ Procedure for Allegations of Abuse

When the DSLs find reasonable cause to believe a specific allegation of abuse, the DSLs in alignment with Management will carry out the following steps:

1. Conduct an assessment and discussion to guide all actions needed to ensure the wellbeing of all involved, following a standard format (see appendix I for Safeguarding Concern Assessment and Discussion form).
2. Subject to the requirements of the assessment, inform the parents of the child(ren) or young person(s) involved in the alleged abuse, victim and perpetrator, confidentially and as soon as possible.
3. Gather and document information and evidence supporting or disproving the allegation.
4. Analyse evidence and determine whether a preponderance of evidence supports the allegation.
5. Prepare a report to Management following a standard format (see appendix II for Incident Report Form) on:
  - a. The nature of the allegation.
  - b. The factual basis of the allegation.



- c. The recommended next steps.

Plant-for-the-Planet will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to this policy and procedure as well as its legal and statutory obligations.

Plant-for-the-Planet will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to staff and partners found in breach of policy. That might include the removal from an event, the removal of the accreditation to the event or the termination of the (employment) contract.

Plant-for-the-Planet will offer support to those affected by harm caused by staff or associated personnel. Decisions regarding support will be made in alignment with the affected person and their legal guardians.

#### ■ **Due Process Protections for Allegations of Abuse**

Because of the seriousness of an accusation of abuse, both young people and adults are entitled to certain protections of due process:

- a. The accused must be informed of the allegations against them in a speedy and confidential way.
- b. The identifying details of each person of interest must be kept confidential to the extent possible and feasible in light of an ongoing investigation.
- c. The details of the investigation must be kept confidential.
- d. During information-gathering meetings, each person of interest may be accompanied by a supporting person, provided that the supporting person is not also a person of interest. Supporting persons include:
  - i. For children and young people: a parent, legal guardian.
  - ii. For adults: A family member, friend, colleague, lawyer or representative of the Human Resources department.
- e. The DSLs and the Management must make every reasonable effort to conclude the investigation as quickly as possible.
- f. During the investigation, Plant-for-the-Planet must make every reasonable effort to protect each person of interest from retaliation, discrimination, and harm outside the scope of official policies and local laws and regulations.
- g. If an allegation is widely known in all or part of the Plant-for-the-Planet community, Management can take appropriate steps to address the situation including disclosure of the fact that an investigation is taking place and/or the basic findings (that the allegation is true or false). These disclosures will be made in a timely and sensitive way, and in a way which privileges the confidentiality of the persons of interest.



- h. If the findings make it appear reasonably likely that a criminal offence has been committed, the case will be reported to the police unless the allegation concerns an adult victim, who expressly does not wish for the case to be reported.

## Plant-for-the-Planet Record-Keeping Responsibilities

### Record Keeping Practices

- DSLs keep clear, confidential records of all incidents and activities related to Safeguarding.
- All specific allegations of abuse are recorded with written reports.
- All investigations are recorded with written reports on both process and outcome.
- All decisions, actions, and interpretations related to Safeguarding policy are recorded in writing.
- All records are kept in a central, secure location, and are backed up to protect against loss.
- All records are clearly marked with permission levels to explicitly state who may access them.

## 11. Online Event Guidelines

Operating online carries specific safeguarding risks connected to protecting people from abuse and protecting sensitive information. We must make sure these are managed and reflected in our policies and practices.

- Slide at the beginning of each online event with house rules.
  - Respect: meet everyone you speak to and encounter with mutual respect. Rule of thumb: if you would not say it in-person - do not say it online either.
  - Do not record or screenshot without appropriate prior notice or permission from everyone present at the event.
- Disable private chat function to prevent inappropriate contact from occurring.
- Have at least one person from the team in every call or meeting with external stakeholders, children and young people.
- Any incident is to be reported to the DSL immediately.
- Encourage the participants to use first names and preferred pronouns, and change the participant name if needed.

## 12. In-Person Events Guidelines

The following abusive behaviours are not tolerated at Plant-for-the-Planet events or on Plant-for-the-Planet property:

- Any hitting, pushing, grabbing, or otherwise physically harming by any person against any person.
- Any act of sexual assault by any person against any person.
- Any sexualized act, contact, or interaction by an adult or a child with another child or young person.
- Any attempt by an adult to develop an inappropriately intimate friendship or relationship with a child or young person.
- Any person shouting at, insulting, belittling, degrading, intimidating, or otherwise emotionally harming any person in a deliberate and intentional way.

## 13. General Event and Interaction Guideline

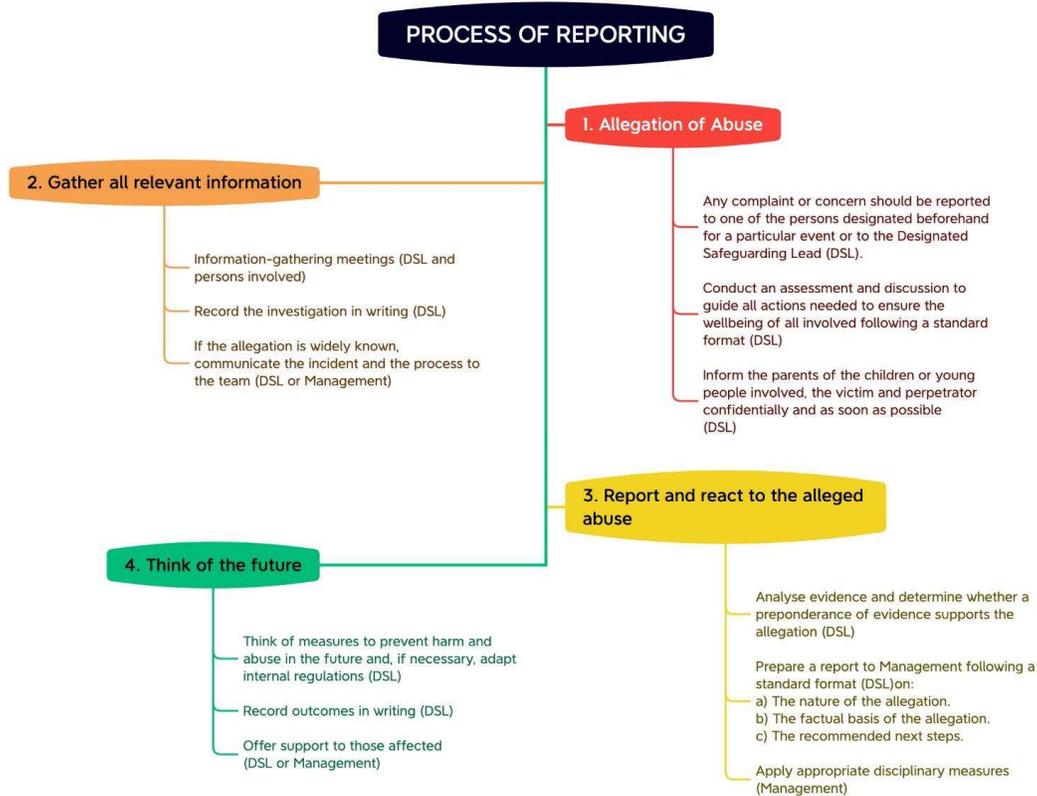
Plant-for-the-Planet will not tolerate:

- Inappropriate comments about any person's appearance, including excessive flattering comments.
- Inappropriate conversation or inquiries of a sexual nature (e.g. questions about a person's sexuality or his/her sexual relationship with others).
- Disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of, or manner towards, a person based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation.
- Use of inappropriate (pet) names. Vilification or humiliation.
- Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature.
- Obscene gestures and language.
- Facilitating/permitting access to pornographic material.

Any staff reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by Plant-for-the-Planet's Code of Conduct (Point 7).

## 14. Process of Reporting

For a better understanding, the reporting process is shown again graphically below:



Presented with xmind