





## CHILD AND VULNERABLE PERSONS POLICY

### **1. Introduction**

WindReach Bermuda, a local Bermuda company limited by guarantee, is a Bermuda registered charity (Charity Registration No. 92). WindReach's mission is to enrich the quality of life for people with special needs.

### **2. Policy Statement**

WindReach is a community-focused charity and seeks, wherever possible, to uphold every persons' right to be safe from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. The objective of this policy is to document and codify the way in which WindReach will safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults (collectively "Vulnerable Persons"), and provide protocol for reporting and handling of incidents relating to Vulnerable Persons.

WindReach considers all expressions of concern and allegations of abuse very seriously and will make every effort to respond and refer appropriately in each instance.

### **3. Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all:

- Directors;
- Employees;
- Service providers;
- Volunteers;
- Partners; and
- Contractors.

### **4. Types of Abuse**

A person may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or by a stranger.

The main areas of abuse are set out below (this is not exhaustive):

a) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

b) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a vulnerable person such as to cause negative effects on emotional development. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating.

c) Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the vulnerable person is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts. Sexual abuse can also include acts where touching is not involved such as being made to look at, or aid in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities.

d) Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide or ignoring the need for basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medication and supervision.

Ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of necessities of life, such as medication or adequate nutrition.

e) Financial or Material Abuse

Theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

f) Discriminatory Abuse

Racism, sexism or bigotry based on a person's disability, together with other forms of harassment, belittlement, slurs or similar actions.

**5. Prevention - Training, Vetting and Supervision**

WindReach takes the view that a robust on-boarding framework for those volunteers and employees interacting with vulnerable persons is the key. A multi-faceted approach

to safeguarding vulnerable persons has been adopted involving thorough background checks, mandated training, the appointment of a vulnerable persons officer (and deputy Vulnerable Persons officer) (together the “VPO”) and related interview questioning as more fully set out below.

a) Background Checks

Those individuals who will come into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as part of their involvement with WindReach shall be subject to a prior criminal record check by the Bermuda Police Service. Every employee shall consent to a criminal records check as a condition of their employment and, to the extent possible, such check shall be completed prior to the commencement of their employment.

b) Training

The VPO, under the direction of the Board of Directors, shall be responsible for ensuring that every volunteer and employee of WindReach (each a “Representative”) receives training in the matters covered by this Policy appropriate to their role within WindReach. The selected training will be in accordance with policy and regulation and updated from time to time.

c) VPO

As stated above, WindReach has appointed a vulnerable persons officer and deputy vulnerable persons officer both of whom will have a clean criminal record check and have received training in the matters addressed by this Policy. The VPO is the designated person for reporting of incidents involving Vulnerable Persons as more fully set out below.

Erica Fulton, VPO – (t) 238 2469 (m) 735 4086  
Paige Belvin, Deputy VPO – (t) 238 2469 (m) 336 5501

d) Interview Process

WindReach will conduct in-person interviews with prospective employees and relevant volunteers who will be interacting with vulnerable persons. Hypothetical scenarios, wherein the interests of vulnerable persons are threatened, will be posed and the interviewee will be questioned as to their proposed response.

e) Supervision

The VPO will oversee projects involving vulnerable persons and will work with the program manager to ensure that the vulnerable persons are protected as far as possible and report to the WindReach Board of Directors with any protocol changes.

## **6. Abuse – Duties and Protocol**

### a) Duty to inform

All WindReach employees and volunteers have a statutory duty of care to report any suspicions they may have in relation to the abuse of vulnerable persons (this includes past or present abuse). As such, the below protocol for reporting incidents should be followed as a matter of utmost importance.

### b) Responding to a report or incident

If someone, including a vulnerable person, reports an incident, they must be taken seriously and listened to carefully. Once an allegation is made, there should be immediate action to prevent further harm and victimisation. The VPO should be made aware of the incident or report as soon as reasonably possible. The VPO should determine whether contact should be made with the Bermuda Police Service or appropriate authority, and act accordingly.

When a complaint or allegation has been made against someone connected to WindReach, be it an employee or volunteer, he/she must be made aware of their rights under relevant legislation and the terms of their employment contract.

It is the responsibility of VPO, working with the reporting individual to document the report or incident including all relevant details and to liaise with the Board of Directors to conduct a thorough investigation. The report shall be in the format of the Protection Incident Reporting Form attached hereto, Appendix B.

Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting and investigation procedure. All details of an incident or report must be kept confidential but for reporting to the VPO and relevant authorities (for the avoidance of doubt, this should not supersede taking action to ensure the victim is safe and free from further abuse).

### c) VPO

The VPO and deputy VPO are responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children and vulnerable adults appropriately. The relevant contact numbers for the Bermuda Police Service and other useful contacts are set out below.

## **7. Code of Conduct For Representatives**

WindReach will not tolerate a breach of the below code of behaviour and conduct (the “Code”). A violation of the Code may result immediate termination of your relationship

with WindReach and if an employee, in disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.

## Guidelines

Those interacting with Vulnerable Persons should adhere to the following best practice:

- Vulnerable Persons should be supervised in a manner consistent with their abilities.
- Treat the wellbeing and safety of the Vulnerable Persons as paramount.
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a Vulnerable Person, especially where you are unobserved.
- If any form of physical contact is required it should be provided openly and be appropriate to the abilities of the Vulnerable Person.
- If supervision in changing rooms or restrooms is required, Representatives should work in pairs where possible.
- Representative must feel confident to report concerns or worries about other staff members or volunteers to the VPO.
- The VPO and parents must be informed of all incidents and accidents involving Vulnerable Persons at the earliest opportunity. This can be done in person, by telephone or writing depending on the situation.
- If the Vulnerable Person is accidentally injured as a result of a Representative's actions, seems distressed in any way, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, always report such incidents as soon as possible to the VPO or another colleague and make a written report to the VPO.
- If a child or vulnerable adult arrives at the activity or service showing any signs or symptoms of abuse and or that give you cause for concern you must act appropriately and follow the procedures detailed above.

Representatives should never:

- Let any allegation made by a child or vulnerable adult be ignored or go unrecorded.
- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay.
- Engage in sexually suggestive games.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children or vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged, or use it themselves.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Except as provided herein, do things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable adults that they are able to do themselves, e.g. assist in changing. It

may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children and vulnerable adults, particularly if they are very young or have special needs. The tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s) of the child or the carer(s) or legal guardian(s) of a vulnerable person if they are adjudged to be incapable of self-determination. In an emergency situation that requires this type of help, you should endeavour to have someone present and fully inform the parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s) as soon as it is reasonable possible. In such situations it is important that you ensure that all staff etc. are sensitive to the child or vulnerable adult and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost sensitivity and discretion.

- Except as may be explicitly agreed between the Representative, WindReach and the parent(s), carer(s) or guardians of the child or the carer(s) or legal guardian of a vulnerable person if they are adjudged to be incapable of self-determination, share a room with such child or vulnerable person.
- Access pornography sites while acting as a WindReach volunteer, service provider or under WindReach employment.

## Appendix A

### Useful contacts

WindReach Vulnerable Persons Officer	Tel: 735 4086
WindReach Deputy Vulnerable Persons Officer	Tel: 595 2774
Police/Ambulance/Fire Emergency	Tel: 911
Hamilton Police Station	Tel: 295-0011
Hospital	Tel: 236-2345
Centre Against Abuse Women's Hotline	297-8278
Centre Against Abuse Men's Hotline	332 1293
Child and Family Services (Administration)	Tel: 296-7575
Child Abuse Referral Hotline	Tel: 278-9111
The Coalition for the Protection of Children	295-1150
The Family Centre	232-1116
Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute	236-3770
Child and Adolescent Services	Tel: 236-3770 ext. 3463
Emergency Counselling Lifelines (9:00 am – 5:00 pm)	Tel: 239-2261
(5:00 pm – 8:00 pm)	Tel: 236-3770
Medical Social Workers	Tel: 236-2345
The National Office for Seniors and the Physically Challenged (NOSPC)	292-7802
SCARS: Saving Children and Revealing Secrets	297-2277
Women's Resource Centre Hotline	295-7273
Bermuda Youth Counselling Services	Tel: 296-7458
Family Services	Tel: 294-5870
Aging and Disability Services	Tel: 292-7802
Physical Abuse Centre – Hotline	Tel: 297-8278
or	Tel: 292-4366

**Appendix B**

**PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**

All information will be treated in strict confidence

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child/Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Next of Kin: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you reporting you concerns or passing on those of someone else? Please give details:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please give a brief description of what has prompted the concerns including any specific incidents, places, dates, times etc:

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Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

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Have you spoken to the child/person? If so what was said?

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Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details:

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Have you consulted anybody? If so give details:

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Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

To whom reported: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of reporting: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_

**This form should now be given to the Protection Officer by hand in a sealed envelope marked Private and Confidential.**