

Sutara Learning Foundation

Safeguarding Policy



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Introduction and Purpose

Safeguarding is a broad term that Sutara uses to describe the organisation's policies, procedures, and practices designed to prevent and protect people from all forms of abuse, including child abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence of any kind, including sexual harassment caused by employees, volunteers, associated personnel, operations, or programmes.

Sutara is committed to upholding and maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and integrity, and its commitment to safeguarding complies with the values that shape our culture.

This policy is informed by and committed to the principles laid out in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, and the **1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**.

Sutara believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the duty to safeguard others applies without exception to anyone associated with Sutara.

Safeguarding incidents are rooted in an imbalance of power, particularly gendered and sexualized abuses of power. Sutara has a **zero-tolerance approach** to all forms of abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence of any kind, including sexual harassment committed by employees, volunteers, or others affiliated with our work. We acknowledge that the risk of these harms can never be completely eradicated. For this reason, zero tolerance means we **encourage reports, investigate thoroughly, and sanction even minor infringements** of this policy and related breaches of our **Global Code of Conduct**, whether a proven incident happened during or outside of working hours.

Sutara recognizes that **persons with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination** and are at increased risk of abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence. This heightened risk requires **additional protective measures** and a **disability-inclusive safeguarding approach** that proactively includes persons with disabilities.

The Purpose of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- **Set out Sutara's position** on the prevention of and protection from abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence of all kinds.
- **Define responsibilities and procedures** to prevent abuse from happening in the first place.
- **Outline reporting procedures** when a suspicion, allegation, or actual harm occurs.

Scope



This policy applies to:

- **All employees** contracted by Sutara, including permanent and temporary employees and interns.
 - **All volunteers**, including but not limited to national and international volunteers, e-volunteers, community volunteers, corporate volunteers, youth volunteers, and the voluntary workforce.
 - **Associated personnel** engaged in work or visits related to Sutara, including but not limited to partners, consultants, contractors, journalists, funders, and government representatives.
 - **All directors.**
 - **Guests and observers.**
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Responsibilities

All Personnel

All employees, volunteers, consultants, directors, guests, observers, and other representatives are **obliged to follow this policy** and maintain an environment that prevents exploitation and abuse while encouraging the reporting of policy breaches.

All employees, volunteers, consultants, directors, guests, observers, and anyone associated with Sutara must:

- **Create and maintain an environment** that prevents abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence, including sexual harassment.
- **Promote a zero-tolerance approach** to all forms of abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual violence, including sexual harassment.
- **Develop relationships based on equality, trust, respect, and honesty.**
- **Recognize power imbalances** based on characteristics such as gender, race, disability, sexuality, caste, ethnicity, education, and role in an organization.
- **Report concerns immediately** about any suspected or actual breach of this policy.

Children

- Treat children **with respect**, value their views, and take them seriously.
 - Use **positive, non-violent** methods to support and manage children's behaviour.
 - Maintain **professional boundaries** and be mindful of how language and actions may be perceived by children.
 - Follow the **'two-adult rule'** when conducting activities involving children to ensure that two or more adults supervise all activities and are always present.
 - Report **any concerns** about the welfare of a child.
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Prohibited Behaviours

All employees, volunteers, consultants, directors, guests, observers, and anyone associated with Sutara **must never**:

- **Sexually harass, assault, or abuse anyone** in any form.
 - **Engage in sexual exploitation**, including taking advantage of an imbalance of power for financial, sexual, or political gain.
 - **Exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sexual activity** (including sex work, even where legal).
 - **Have sexual relations with any person under 18 years old**, regardless of mistaken belief in their age.
 - **Physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse a child** or fail to report child-related concerns.
 - **Use corporal punishment or physical discipline** towards children.
 - **Use technology to exploit, harass, or abuse** any person.
 - **Fail to disclose** any convictions or child-related investigations they have been subject to.
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Reporting

Sutara places a **mandatory obligation** on all employees, volunteers, consultants, partner agencies, sub-grantees, and visitors to immediately **report concerns, suspicions, allegations, or incidents** related to abuse, sexual violence, or policy breaches.

Concerns can be reported to:

- **Line managers, functional leads, or project safeguarding focal points.**
- **Sutara's Global Safeguarding Team** at safeguarding@sutara.org.
- **Sutara's Whistleblowing channel** at whistleblowing@sutara.org.

All reports are **confidential**, and Sutara **will protect whistleblowers** from retaliation. Serious incidents may be reported to donors or relevant authorities while ensuring strict confidentiality.

Implementation and Enforcement

Risk Assessment and Programme Design

Sutara integrates safeguarding **risk assessment and mitigation** at every stage of programme design and implementation.



Incident Response

- All safeguarding reports are taken **seriously and investigated immediately**.
- A **survivor-centred approach** ensures survivors are treated with dignity and respect, and their rights, privacy, and needs are prioritized.
- **Strict confidentiality** is maintained throughout the process.

Safer Recruitment

- Sutara implements **robust background checks** for all staff, volunteers, and representatives before employment or engagement.
- No one begins service **without satisfactory background checks**.

Training and Awareness

- All Sutara employees, volunteers, and associates receive **mandatory safeguarding training** as part of their induction.
- **Regular refresher training** is provided at least once every two years.

Communications, Storytelling, and Social Media

- All communications must portray individuals **with dignity and respect**.
 - No images should be sexually provocative, demeaning, or culturally inappropriate.
 - **Informed consent** must be obtained before using an individual's story or image.
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Review and Updates

- **Last updated:** March 2025
- **Next review date:** February 2028
- **Policy owner:** Managing Director