**Safeguarding Code of Conduct**

**PROTECTING CHILDREN, VULNERABLE ADULTS AND VOLUNTEERS**

This code of conduct outlines the behaviour expected of staff and volunteers from Outreach International who work in, visit or assist with projects involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It has been informed by the views of children and young people and is based on best practice input from Safenetwork, the National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector, managed by the NSPCC.

It should be used in conjunction with the Responsible Volunteering Code of Conduct.

We hope that by following this code you will understand and maintain the standard of behaviour expected of you, help to protect the children and vulnerable adults that we work with from abuse and inappropriate behaviour, and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against you.

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

When working with children and vulnerable adults we are acting in a position of trust. Staff and volunteers are likely to be seen as role models by children and young people, and must act in an appropriate manner at all times. The following list provides a guide for what we consider to be important and appropriate.

- follow the guidance provided by Outreach International and any procedures that local Project leaders may have in place;
- ensure your contact with children and vulnerable adults is only in direct pursuit of your role on the project;
- avoid favouritism and treat all children and adults fairly and without prejudice or discrimination;
- listen to and respect children and vulnerable adults at all times;
- value and take children’s contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible;
- ensure your language is appropriate to age and ability, and not offensive or discriminatory;
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow;
- respect a person’s right to personal privacy;
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like;
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people;
- Seek advice from your coordinator on issues that require additional sensitivity locally, such as naming people with HIV in Kenya;
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose;
• ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and vulnerable adults or, if this isn’t possible, that you are within sight or hearing of other adults;
• be close to where others are working. If a child specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, inform the other staff so that they know where you and the child are;
• some behaviours that are considered acceptable in the country you are visiting may not be acceptable to us. Seek advice from your local coordinator if you are uncomfortable with something you have experienced on your project. Then challenge unacceptable behaviour and report allegations/suspicions of abuse to your local coordinator and the UK team;
• Please report any breaches of this code of conduct promptly so that we can investigate.

THINGS TO AVOID. IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST YOU EVER:

• develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and vulnerable adults that is not a direct part of your role on the Project or agreed with the Project Director or Coordinator;
• do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult that they can do for themselves;
• administer any medication unless qualified and authorised by the project director/project coordinator to do so;
• patronise or treat children and adults as if they are silly;
• let children and vulnerable adults have your personal contact details (mobile number or address);
• make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and adults;
• act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
• make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
• jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
• either exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues;
• conduct a sexual relationship with a child or vulnerable adult or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or vulnerable adult. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not acceptable under any circumstances; we also caution against forming a relationship with any member of staff on the project.
• allow allegations about abuse or misconduct to go unreported;
• rely on your reputation or that of the Outreach International to protect you.
All members of staff and volunteers are expected to abide by these guidelines and report any observed breaches of this code to Stephen Summers and/or James Chapman, the Directors of Outreach International, as soon as is practicably possible, steve@outreachinternational.co.uk and james@outreachinternational.co.uk

**ACTION IN THE EVENT OF A BREACH OF OUR SAFE GUARDING CODE**

Volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be asked to leave their volunteer placement with immediate effect and with no refund available. Staff may be subject to Outreach International’s disciplinary procedures. Where it is reported that a local member of staff or the manager of a project are in breach of this code then the Directors of Outreach International will investigate the breach and support for the project may be withdrawn.

Any serious breaches may result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or an independent safeguarding authority.