Child Protection Policy
Wings of Hope for Trauma Care

I: Introduction/Purpose of the policy

Based on the belief that working with children is essentially working for them, Wings of Hope for Trauma Care adopts a child protection policy, not only at the legal and policy level, but also at the intellectual, emotional, psychological, and practical level. The organization seeks to provide a free and safe working and learning environment that is respectful, equal and inclusive, and ensures an environment free from violence, harm, exploitation and neglect, as children have the right to life, progress, protection and participation, based on the organization's values centered on children and their best needs, since its establishment in 2011 until now.

This policy constitutes a cultural and ethical framework that reflects the daily practices and intellectual orientations that Wings of Hope for Trauma Care follows and seeks to achieve. The organization's values and policies in working with children intersect with the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, which states that children's protection and physical and psychological well-being are prerequisites for allowing children to express their feelings, thoughts, and issues. The organization also supports children psychologically and socially to achieve a reasonable level of mental health.

Wings of Hope for Trauma Care is committed to creating a safe environment that believes in children's right to life, survival, and development, and prioritizes the best interests of the child. It also adopts the principles of non-discrimination and participation. Wings of Hope for Trauma Care implements its programs within frameworks that ensure the safety and care of the children who benefit from its services. The organization seeks to design and implement programs in safe environments for children, and to create the necessary conditions to address current or potential risks through channels that are consistent with the nature of the communities that the organization targets for its various interventions.

This policy aims to emphasize the importance of an open and aware environment, in which issues of concern related to child safety and security can be discussed and addressed in a fair and contextualized manner, in order to minimize the risk of children being harmed. The Child Protection Policy educates staff, volunteers, target groups, and the local community on issues related to child abuse, with the aim of creating a safe and child-friendly culture. It also commits all relevant stakeholders to implement interventions that ensure the safety of children.

This policy is a reference document for Wings of Hope for Trauma Care and provides the basis for the organization's staff to emphasize the best interest and safety of children through the interventions implemented by the organization.

II: Theoretical framework

Wings of Hope for Trauma Care has a set of values that form the human, social, intellectual, professional, and ethical framework for its interventions, which include the ethical code of the profession of social work and psychology, social justice, acceptance of difference, respect, tolerance, encouraging the importance of access to psychosocial support to maintain the best interest, safety and security of children, and giving them a voice in all the interventions it designs and implements. The organization adheres to the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/Convention on the Rights of the Child, and related conventions, as well as local and international child protection laws such as: The Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 and the Palestinian Child Law as amended by Decree Law No. 19 of 2012 amending the Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004.

III: Definitions

Wings of Hope for Trauma Care adopts the following definitions based on the purposes of this policy and the theoretical framework upon which this policy is built.

- **Organization**: Wings of Hope for Trauma Care
- **Wings of Hope for Trauma Care Representatives:** All full-time and part-time employees of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care, employees of partner organizations, volunteers, consultants, and contractors of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care, and the Child Protection Policy prepared by the organization.
- **Adult:** Any person over the age of eighteen.
- **Child:** Any human being who has not reached the age of eighteen years, regardless of gender.
- **Children with disabilities:** Children with physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when combined with various barriers, may prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.
- **Direct contact with children:** Being in close contact with a child or children within the framework of the organization's work, whether the contact is occasional or regular, short or long term, and includes contact with children whether through organizing an awareness session, holding outdoor groups, accompanying children on trips, or by following up on their psychological, social, and legal affairs.
- **Indirect contact with children:** Access to information about children in the context of the organization's work, such as their names, locations, individual or project

addresses, photos, case studies, as well as activities, actions, or decisions that may affect the context of the organization's work with children.

- **Informed consent:** The obligation to provide all available information about any activity or work the organization does with the child to the parent or guardian, to enable them to make an informed decision to participate in any activity or its outcome.
- **The best interest of the child:** One of the basic principles stipulated in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, as it is considered a fundamental right and a legal principle that arises in all judicial procedures that affect the interests of the child, and is considered a preferred priority in all circumstances that the competent authorities must adhere to and respect when taking any action or measure against the juvenile that may affect his life and his interest, with the aim of protecting, rehabilitating and reintegrating him into society, because this principle constitutes a moral system that requires the best interest of the child to be given priority over all other considerations, as the axis around which all the rights established for children, both international and local, revolve.
- **Child Protection:** Includes procedures, guidelines, and standards designed to protect children from intentional harm, unintentional harm, adopting the appropriate methodology to immediately respond to or address the risk, and actions taken to prevent violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, and to safeguard the dignity and well-being of the child.
- **Safeguarding:** The responsibility of organizations to ensure that their staff and programs support and promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults and do not put them at risk of harm, abuse, and mistreatment. This includes the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and child protection under this broad term.
- **Protection:** The responsibility and actions taken to prevent and respond to the exploitation and abuse of children or vulnerable adults within communities. This includes building awareness, supporting training, identifying and dealing with all complaints, monitoring and evaluating protection models, and taking personal responsibility.
- **Violence:** Includes all forms of violence, harm, physical or mental abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse.

Types of violence:

- **Physical violence:** It includes any punishment in which physical force is used, the purpose of which is to inflict a certain degree of pain or harm, regardless of its

severity. Harm includes giving or exposing children to any kind of harmful substances, such as tobacco and its products, alcoholic beverages and drugs.

- **Psychological violence:** It includes psychological, mental, verbal, or emotional abuse through direct or indirect interaction, including all forms of interaction that harm children, such as making them feel worthless, unloved, unwanted, endangered, bullied, intimidated, threatened, bullied, bullied, exploited, abused, corrupt, contemptuous, ostracized, isolated, ignored, insulted, insulted, humiliated, ridiculed, and degraded, as well as exposing them to violent or inappropriate visual or auditory material.
- **Sexual violence:** All types and forms of sexual violence, including direct sexual acts, sexualized touching, indecent exposure, sexualized language, and pornography.
- **Bullying:** Includes physical, psychological, and sexual violence, often through children bullying other children.
- **Self-harm:** When a child intentionally causes injury or harm to themselves.
- **Violence against children:** The intentional use of physical force or energy against any child, whether by a single individual or a group of individuals, which may result in immediate or potential harm to the child and may threaten the child's life and survival.
- **Child abuse:** Any intentional act that results in harm to a child, whether psychological or physical.
- **Exploitation:** Any attempt to abuse or take advantage of a position of vulnerability, unequal power or abuse of trust for material, social or political gain and includes the following types:
- **Sexual Exploitation:** The actual or attempted abuse of power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, gaining material, social or political gain through the sexual exploitation of another person.
- **Child Labor:** Means any economic activity carried out by a person under the age of fifteen.
- **Trafficking:** The recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of children or vulnerable adults for the purpose of labor, prostitution or sexual exploitation.
- **Sex for Survival:** This type of exploitation occurs when a child or vulnerable adult living in poverty or in an emergency situation has no survival option but to engage in forced sex. That is, sex in exchange for food, water, drugs, shelter, money, and any other basic survival needs.
- **Child exploitation:** The use of a child to meet the needs, interests, or benefit of another person or entity in which the child is subjected to physical, psychological, and developmental harm, such as unfair treatment, cruelty, long hours of labor such as child labor, sexual exploitation, or modern slavery.

- **Neglect or negligent treatment:** Neglect means failing to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, failing to protect them from danger, or failing to provide essential services when those responsible for the child's care have the means, knowledge, and opportunities to do so.

IV: Our culture

The organization's culture and values are based on promoting the social and psychological environment, the principles of human rights, gender equality, justice, non-discrimination, integrity, transparency, and opposition to all forms of violence.

V: Scope of the Child Protection Policy

All employees of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care, whether full or part-time, and employees of partner organizations, as well as volunteers, consultants, and contractors of the Organization, are bound by the Child Protection Policy prepared by the organization.

VI: General rules

1. Adult Codes of Conduct

- The best interest of the child is the basis for dealing with children.
- All Wings of Hope for Trauma Care representatives who have direct or indirect contact with children must be informed of the organization's child protection policies and standards and must be made aware that they are expected to comply with these policies and standards.
- All employees of the organization are required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the organization's standards, policies and Code of Conduct.
- All employees are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct on Child Protection.
- Wings of Hope for Trauma Care employees and partners are not permitted to establish sexual relationships with coworkers that are inherently based on power imbalances. Such relationships are contrary to the principles of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care and negatively impact the credibility and integrity of its work.

2. Privacy of information

Children's personal information, including records, photos, texts and movies, is treated with the utmost discretion, and therefore the following guidelines must be adhered to: All information (digital and paper) is stored securely:

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- When needed and appropriate, only the program director or human resources officer can access children's information.
- The process of authorizing access to information is clearly documented between the parties involved, disclosing the nature of the information, the reason for the need, and the expected use of the information.
- The use of any visual or written material about children that may lead to the disclosure of private information about any child is prohibited without the prior written consent of the child's guardian.
- Informed consent must be obtained from the children's guardians to use audio-visual materials that concern them, using the forms approved by the institution in its policies and programs.
- Language and visual materials that are appropriate and respectful of local cultures must be used in all communications from the organization and its representatives.

3. Behavioral rules for dealing with children

The organization adheres to behavioral controls that will implement and activate the child protection policy, through employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and others as necessary to deal professionally and systematically with children:

- Act in a manner consistent with the values of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care, including adherence to the Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- Treat all children with respect.
- Respect cultural differences.
- Recognize circumstances that may pose a risk to children.
- Empowering children by discussing their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behavior.
- Report any suspicions of child abuse.
- Show motivation and encouragement.
- Beware of potential mistreatment by coworkers or peers of the child.
- Avoid putting the child in dangerous situations, such as putting older and younger children together without supervision.
- Avoid putting yourself in a compromising or sensitive situation, such as an adult and a child alone, or not being sensitive to the local culture when talking to children of the opposite sex.
- Avoid doing something that could be misinterpreted by a third party.
- Respect cultural and social differences and beliefs.
- Asking children's permission before taking their photos according to the organization's communication policy.
- Ensure that an adult is present when transporting children, and if this is not possible, obtain the necessary permissions.

4. Guidelines for working with children with disabilities

- Discrimination, exclusion, or reinforcement of social stigma is strictly prohibited.
- Children with disabilities must be respected for their differences, dignity, and individual autonomy, and facilitate their effective and full participation in society, including the freedom to make decisions in a manner that takes into account their abilities and potential.
- The organization is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, in a way that ensures that appropriate resources to support children with disabilities and their families are available, accessible, and participate in the activities and programs offered by the organization.

5. Prohibited behaviors

- Any form of violence against children (including violence between children and self-harm) is strictly prohibited, and a child's age is not a justification for violence.
- The exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sexual or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior is strictly prohibited.
- Representatives should be aware that they may work with children who require special attention, due to circumstances they have experienced, or abuse they may have suffered, but the adult is always responsible for establishing an appropriate relationship with the child, and cases where the child misbehaves should be reported.
- Representatives of the organization should not put themselves in compromising or vulnerable positions, and should be careful to avoid discriminating against children, showing preferential treatment, or favoring certain children over their peers.
- Beating and physically abusing children (even if it is socially acceptable).
- Emotionally or verbally abuse a child.
- Be cruel to the child. If a child expresses discomfort with a behavior, stop the behavior.
- Having sex or engaging in any sexual activity with a child, including inappropriate touching.
- Sending written or verbal messages to a child that are insulting or harmful, such as text messages and pornography.
- Using computers, cell phones, video cameras, or social media to exploit or harass a child or access or share child exploitation material.
- Recruiting a child.
- Encouraging a child to socialize with them outside of work-related activities.

- Take a child to their home.
- Finding themselves alone with a child (there may be exceptions).
- Doing things for the child of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Showing favoritism.
- Being drunk or under the influence of drugs when they are with children.

VII: Roles and Responsibilities

- All representatives of the organization are required to familiarize themselves with the Child Protection Policy and associated definitions.
- All employees of the organization must acknowledge receipt of and agree to the organization's policies and associated Codes of Conduct.
- The organization is committed to making every effort to ensure that new employees have no history of child abuse (official clearance certificate is required).
- The organization is committed to providing a positive and open atmosphere for the discussion of child protection policies and procedures, whether formally or informally.
- The best interest of the child is the cornerstone of the child protection process, and in the event of a conflict of interest, the welfare of the child shall take precedence.
- The Child Protection Policy is referenced in any agreement with partners who will have direct contact with children within the framework of that agreement.
- The organization provides an atmosphere in which children do not hesitate to disclose cases of abuse, as every child has the right to be heard. It is our duty to listen to and take seriously any concerns that children may have, especially when talking about harm or abuse. It is important to let a child who discloses abuse know that the information must be shared and that it cannot be kept secret. The child should also be told that the information will only be shared with people who need to know about it.
- The organization conducts trainings on the child protection policy periodically and as needed.
- It is not the responsibility of the first person who hears of an alleged or suspected case of abuse to decide whether or not abuse has occurred, but rather to report the case immediately to the relevant program director.
- The senior staff member present in the institution must take all appropriate and reasonable measures to protect children in the institution, and in the event of a report or investigation of abuse, every effort must be made to ensure that the child concerned feels safe and that the necessary support is organized.
- Any person who is concerned, or is informed of information related to the safety of a child, in any institution, association, body, or group within an activity or

program in partnership with the organization, must inform the Human Resources Officer in the organization within 24 hours at most, and the organization, through the Human Resources Officer or the General Manager, will communicate with the concerned partner through the official communication channels available.

- Any individual from the organization's representatives who suspects, or knows of acts of bullying or self-harm carried out by any child within the framework of his work, must take appropriate measures to protect the child or children concerned and has the authority to remove or discipline the child who is committing the abuse.

VIII: Specific responsibilities assigned to program managers

- Addressing complaints promptly, objectively, sensitively and with integrity.
- Acting as a role model for all employees.
- Ensuring that all persons working within their supervisory responsibilities and subject to this policy have read and understood its content.
- Adopting a culture of openness to allow for discussion of any issues or concerns, and ensuring that employees concerned are held accountable, to prevent poor practice or potentially abusive behavior from going unpunished.
- Monitoring the workplace to ensure compliance with this policy, identifying potentially abusive behavior and taking appropriate action to investigate it.

IX: Specific responsibilities assigned to the General Administration of Wings of Hope for Trauma Care

- Training staff on child protection concepts, with the aim of unifying concepts, building a common language, and raising awareness of the procedures followed in the institution.
- Conducting a comprehensive investigation into all complaints related to the abuse or exploitation of children with whom the institution comes into contact, in accordance with the procedures listed below.
- Informing potential employees and representatives of the institution of the requirement that all representatives comply with and adhere to the child protection policy adopted by the institution.
- Informing representatives of the institution and potential employees that the institution, based on its sole discretion, reserves the right to conduct a criminal record check, in cases where such a check is permitted by law.
- Adhering to any requirements imposed by law, regarding reporting potential abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities and informing them of it.

X: Handling complaints and disciplinary procedures

- Follow the complaints procedures, disciplinary procedures, and the organization's human resources manual.
- Senior staff at Wings of Hope for Trauma Care, or its program managers, should inform the Director General, for consultation and decision-making, on the appropriate course of action for the investigation.
- After the initial investigation, the Director General will prepare a written report outlining the nature of the concerns and risks to the child/children, and the investigation procedures, and share this report with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.
- Further consultations will be conducted with relevant persons on site, and with the organization's lawyers if necessary, in order to decide on the appropriate response. The decision on the appropriate response must be made to all parties, with appropriate confidentiality.
- The institution's representative at the location of the abused child shall take all possible measures to protect the child during the investigation, ensuring that there is no communication between the parties to the investigation.
- It is essential to avoid any delay in the investigation or the procedures resulting from it, if this leads to any negative impact on the child.
- An employee who is subject to an investigation conducted by the institution or the authorities regarding the abuse of a child may be temporarily suspended from work, and this employee shall not have contact with children during the course of the investigation. The employee shall be informed of the charges against him/her, and shall be given the opportunity to respond to them.
- Subject to local law or prevailing local customs, Wings of Hope for Trauma Care reserves the right, in the event of termination of an employee's contract due to proven child abuse charges, to disclose such information if requested by an employer for whom the employee may work in the future.
- Inappropriate behavior toward children, including failure to implement the specific and general conditions contained in this policy, constitutes grounds for disciplinary action to the extent that it may include dismissal from employment, termination of consulting, volunteering, internships, or membership in the Organization's Board of Directors.

XI: Prohibition Procedures

The procedures below include all contracting parties with the institution, referred to as employees of the institution. This category includes everyone who has a contractual

relationship, or a volunteer relationship with the institution, in full or in part, such as employees, consultants, and activists:

- The background of any new employee is verified through previous work recommendations from similar organizations.
- Introductory sessions are held for all new employees, regarding the policy of preventing harassment, abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Awareness raising materials are provided to employees.
- Reporting and referral procedures are circulated to employees and workers.
- A condition is included in employment contracts, for everyone who has a contractual relationship with the organization, clarifying the child protection policy and the consequences of violations related to this matter.
- A clear clause is included in the contracts, which talks about the possibility of sharing the details of the investigation, with any worker who violates this policy, with other institutions in the event that it occurs.
- Attaching the policy as a document, with the contracts concluded with workers through Wings of Hope for Trauma Care.
- This document is reviewed and approved by the organization's Board of Directors, before proceeding with the procedures, and after it is approved, it is translated into English, and circulated to the Organization's departments and workers with it.
- Organizing sessions to raise awareness among children, parents, and workers, about the concepts of child protection, and developing awareness programs about the means and methods of reporting.

XII: Reporting child protection violations

- An employee is assigned centrally to coordinate the tasks of prevention and reporting of child protection violations through human resources, and his contact information is circulated to employees, contractors and volunteers.
- A neutral person is assigned to follow up and deal with cases, and this person is assigned by the board of members.
- Those responsible for implementing the procedures and policies pledge to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of information, after their appointment is approved by the Board of Directors, and before they assume their duties.
- A special email is allocated to receive complaints in this context, and only the central person and the complaints follower can view the messages in it. A separate mobile phone is allocated for the purpose of receiving complaints in this context, and the WhatsApp application is downloaded on it and is considered the number

for complaints of child protection violations. The complaints handler receives this phone and deals with the calls and messages that come to him.

- The complaints handler meets with the central coordinator to discuss the complaints that come in, and they decide to form a committee to collect the facts and investigate the complaints that come in. The committee studies all the details of the cases and submits a report and recommendation on how to deal with each case, the type of advice and support needed, and when the role of the institution in this context ends and resorting to satellite channels or other relevant official bodies, and the steps to move forward to deal with the problem immediately.

XIII: Notification and referral procedures

In the event that any employee, consultant, facilitator, supplier, or partner suspects, believes, or confirms that there is physical or sexual abuse or neglect (past or present), it must be reported immediately, through one of the announced channels, verbally, or through the abuse/complaint reporting form, in order to ensure confidentiality and privacy, so that the institution takes all the measures mentioned in the Child Protection Policy, or included in other administrative guides, knowing that the form ensures confidentiality and protection for the person making the report.

XIV: Consequences of Misconduct Actions to be Taken

If an allegation of a breach of the Policy is made regarding an employee, consultant, partner, contractor, etc., a fact-finding committee will be formed to hear the complaint, consisting of the Human Resources Officer, the Complaint Handler, and any other parties nominated by them to be on the committee. If the complaint is substantiated, that individual will be suspended from all activities or relationships with the organization until the outcome of an independent investigation. Contracted employees will continue to receive their full salary during this period. Depending on the outcome of the independent investigation, if it appears that any person with a contractual relationship with the organization has committed criminal acts against children, or in violation of children's rights, or in violation of the principles or standards set out in this Policy, the organization will take immediate disciplinary action, and any other action appropriate to the circumstances. This may mean:

- Employees - disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Volunteers and trainees - termination of relationship with the institution.
- Partners - withdrawal of support or funding or cessation of cooperation.
- Contractors - termination of contract.

The Organization will not tolerate any form of coercion, threat, retaliation, or reprisal against any employee who reports any form of abuse, exploitation, or provides any information that would assist in the investigation.

XV: Responsibilities of the Child Protection Coordination Body

- Training the organization's staff and volunteers on the code of conduct for the child protection policy.
- Providing advice and support to workers and those interested in child protection issues, and identifying the actions to be taken.
- Ensuring that records and data are accurate, protected, and confidential regarding child protection complaints, such that they are only accessible to case managers and specialists.
- Facilitating access for children and staff in the event of reporting abuse, in a manner that ensures the safety of the child, his or her best interests, and the privacy of cases.
- Informing all parties of the code of conduct for the principles of the organization's child protection policy.
- Ensuring that proposed future interventions and current interventions carried out by the organization are in line with and reflect the organization's child protection policy.

XVI: Follow-up and evaluation

The central coordinator collects the necessary data that measures the effectiveness of the mechanisms for reporting child protection violations adopted by the institution, and the extent to which individuals feel comfortable and safe to go to these channels, in a way that preserves the privacy of all individuals working in the institution and beneficiaries of its programs. The officials responsible for dealing with complaints in the institution will also submit reports related to the extent of compliance and adherence to this policy. This report includes the number of cases reported, the mechanisms for dealing with them, and the recommendations made to deal with complaints. The report is submitted annually, and the institution relies on it to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, within a safe environment for children, and to make the necessary amendments to it if necessary.