



# Green The Environment (GTE)

## Green The Environment Youth Safeguarding Policy



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# Green The Environment Youth Safeguarding Policy

## Introduction

Green The Environment (GTE) is committed to safeguarding the well-being, safety, and rights of young people in all its programs, campaigns, and initiatives. This Youth Safeguarding Policy outlines the principles, guidelines, and responsibilities to ensure young people are protected from abuse, exploitation, and harm, in line with international standards and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

As a youth-focused organization, GTE believes in empowering young people to become active participants in environmental conservation and advocacy while ensuring they are protected from harm throughout their engagement with the organization. This policy ensures that youth safeguarding is integrated into every aspect of our work and is designed to offer a comprehensive approach to identifying, preventing, and addressing risks.

## 1. Policy Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Protect young people involved with GTE from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harm.
- Ensure that GTE employees, volunteers, partners, and representatives adhere to safeguarding principles and practices.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing any concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Establish protocols for responsible and ethical engagement with young people, ensuring their safety and dignity are always upheld.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, youth participants, partner organizations, and anyone else engaged with GTE who interacts with young people in any capacity.

## 2. Key Definitions

- **Child/Young Person:** Any individual under the age of 18, as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Youth Participant:** A young person who engages with GTE through its programs, campaigns, environmental initiatives, or any related activities.
- **Safeguarding:** The protection of young people's health, well-being, and human rights, ensuring they live free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and empowering them to grow into adulthood successfully.

- **Child Protection** : The prevention and response to significant harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and young people.

### 3. Commitment to Safeguarding

- **Prevention of Harm:** GTE will take all necessary steps to prevent harm to young people involved in its activities by ensuring proper screening of staff and volunteers, conducting regular risk assessments, and embedding safeguarding practices into all programs and services.
- **Zero Tolerance:** GTE has a zero -tolerance policy for any form of child abuse, exploitation, or harassment. Any violation of this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination of employment or partnership.
- **Youth Empowerment:** GTE is committed to empowering young people through education, awareness, and involvement in decision -making. However, young people's participation will always be voluntary, informed, and free from any form of coercion or manipulation.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Safeguarding Lead** : GTE appoints a designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, coordinating safeguarding efforts, and ensuring compliance across the organization.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** All staff and volunteers must undergo youth safeguarding training, adhere to this policy, and report any safeguarding concerns immediately.
- **Youth Participants:** Youth participants have the right to be informed about their rights and to raise any concerns or complaints about their safety without fear of retribution.
- **Partners and External Stakeholders** : Any partner organizations working with GTE on youth-related activities must adhere to GTE's safeguarding standards and practices.

### 5. Recruitment and Screening

- **Safe Recruitment** : GTE will ensure that all individuals who work with young people, including staff, volunteers, and partners, undergo thorough background checks. This includes verifying references and screening for criminal records to ensure no known risks to young people.
- **Interview Process** : During recruitment, candidates will be assessed for their suitability to work with young people, their understanding of safeguarding principles, and their commitment to protecting young people's rights.

## 6. Safeguarding Measures and Protocols

- **Informed Consent** : GTE will ensure that young people (and their parents or guardians where applicable) give informed consent before participating in an activity. This will include clear explanations of the activity's nature, risks, and use of their data or media (e.g., images or videos).
- **Safe Spaces**: GTE will provide safe and supportive spaces for young people to engage in activities, share their views, and participate in decision-making processes related to environmental initiatives.
- **Monitoring and Supervision** : Activities involving young people will be closely monitored and supervised by trained staff and volunteers. The number of responsible adults will always be sufficient to ensure that young people are protected.

## 7. Digital Safeguarding

- **Online Protection** : GTE will ensure that any online engagement with young people, such as through social media, virtual campaigns, or digital content, adheres to strict safeguarding standards. This includes the protection of personal data, preventing online abuse or exploitation, and ensuring safe online spaces.
- **Ethical Content**: Images, videos, and other digital media featuring young people must comply with safeguarding principles, with appropriate informed consent and without revealing any personal details that could lead to identification or expose them to harm.

## 8. Risk Assessment and Management

- **Risk Analysis**: GTE will conduct regular, participatory risk assessments to identify any potential risks in its youth-related activities. These assessments will take into account the physical, psychological, social, and cultural risks that young people may face, with a focus on gender, disability, and other vulnerability factors.
- **Mitigation**: All identified risks will be carefully managed, and mitigation strategies will be implemented to reduce any potential harm to youth participants.
- **Regular Reviews** : The safeguarding policy and risk management plans will be reviewed annually and updated based on lessons learned and new challenges.

## 9. Reporting and Complaints

**Clear Reporting Mechanisms**: GTE will establish confidential and accessible reporting channels for young people, staff, volunteers, and others to report any

- safeguarding concerns or incidents. This includes options to report via phone, email, or in person.
- **No Retaliation** : GTE will ensure that any individual who reports a concern or participates in an investigation will be protected from retaliation, intimidation, or any negative consequences.
- **Immediate Action** : All safeguarding reports will be acted upon swiftly and appropriately. In cases of immediate risk or harm, urgent protective action will be taken.

## 10. Support for Survivors

- **Support Services**: GTE will provide access to support for young people who have been harmed, including counseling, psychosocial services, and referrals to external agencies as needed.
- **Choice and Autonomy** : Survivors will have the right to choose how and when they wish to access support services, and their privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all times.

## 11. Breaches of the Policy

- **Zero Tolerance for Violations**: Any breaches of this policy, including instances of abuse or exploitation, will not be tolerated. Individuals found to be in violation may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, volunteer status, or partnership agreements.
- **Consequences for Retaliation** : Retaliation against individuals who report safeguarding concerns will be met with strong disciplinary measures. This includes harassment, intimidation, or any form of victimization.

## 12. Training and Awareness

- **Ongoing Training**: All staff, volunteers, and partners involved with youth program will receive regular safeguarding training, including on how to recognize signs of abuse, how to report concerns, and how to interact safely with young people.
- **Youth Awareness**: Young people engaged in GTE activities will also be educated about their rights, how to protect themselves, and the mechanisms available to report concerns.

## 13. Policy Review

This Youth Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with international standards and the evolving needs of young people in

environmental initiatives. Revisions will be made based on feedback from staff, youth participants, and safeguarding specialists.

## 14. Conclusion

Green The Environment is dedicated to creating a safe and empowering environment for young people to participate in environmental action. We take our responsibility to protect young people seriously and are committed to ensuring that they can engage in our programs with confidence, knowing their safety and well-being are our priority.



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