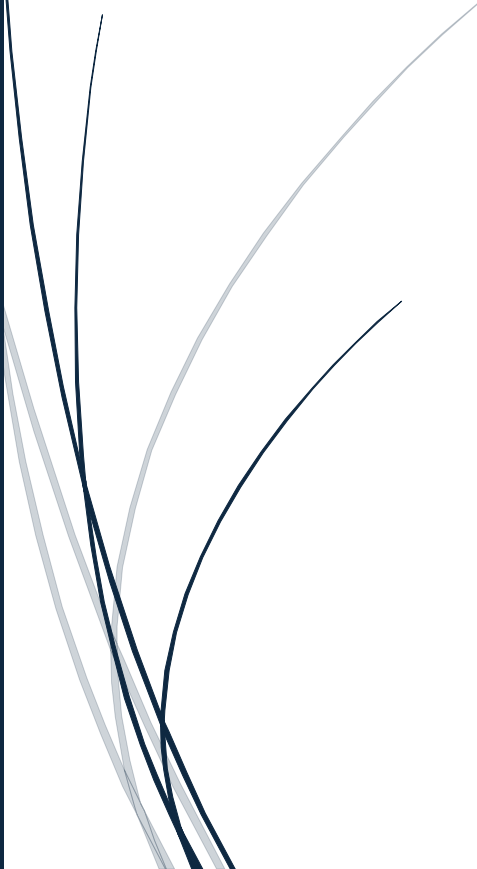


**MINISTRY OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, SPORTS AND RECREATION**



# **Safeguarding Policy**

**National Award Operator - Mauritius**



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## 1. Keeping those involved with the Award safe

- 1.1. ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** has zero tolerance for harassment or exploitation against Award participants, their communities, Award Centres, our Operating Partner, staff, or volunteers. Organisations like ours must be held to the highest set standards of safeguarding.
- 1.2. ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** licenses Operating Partner and Award Centres in the Republic of Mauritius. Each year, more than ten thousand young people participate in the Award across the Republic of Mauritius. These young people are supported by almost 500 adults who mentor Award participants through their Award journey and empower them to develop and support their communities, including other children, young people and vulnerable adults. Keeping Award participants, and those they engage with, safe is the Award's number one priority.
- 1.3. This policy is designed to inform the governance, management and delivery of all Award activities in the Republic of Mauritius. It stipulates the required standards and methodology for protecting people who come into contact with ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** and for ensuring children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in the Award are protected and safe from harm. As a Licencee of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, we, ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** are required to adhere to the foundation safeguarding policy, which this Policy is aligned to.
- 1.4. ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** is committed to:
  - I. Ensuring the interests, integrity and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults are taken into account, in all our considerations and activities, wherever in the world those may be.
  - II. Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we, our licensees and associated organisations work.
  - III. Taking all reasonably practicable steps to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse and to promote their health, wellbeing and human rights.
  - IV. Promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and their protection within a position of mutual trust.
  - V. Promoting human, social values and ethical behaviour.

- 1.5 This policy has been developed based on guidance and support materials from Children's Act 2020, Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.6 The potential for any form of abuse, harm and violence exists in all region and sectors across the Republic of Mauritius. While we work to mitigate risk and minimise harm, when things go wrong, we expect to be judged on the following:
  - I. the measures the Award and its licensed Operating Partner and Award Centres have put in place to prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring;
  - II. the manner in which they respond to an incident of abuse or misconduct; and
  - III. the risk management system put in place to reduce the risk of the incident being repeated.
- 1.7 ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius*** is obliged to report to the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Sports and Recreation, through the National Directorate, any serious incident, accident or potential claim that may have an adverse impact on the Award.

## **2. Definitions and principles of safeguarding**

- 2.1 **Safeguarding refers to protecting all people and the environment from all harm, unintended or otherwise. In the context of the Award, it specifically refers to preventing and responding to harm caused by sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment or bullying of any kind. Children, young people and vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm from exploitation, harassment or abuse and the policy therefore focuses on these groups.**<sup>2</sup>
- 2.2 The aim of this policy and connected policies and Operating Partner and Award Centre agreements, is to minimise the likelihood and impact of these actions on Award beneficiaries and on those working or volunteering for and with ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius*** and /or licensed Operating Partners and Award Centres.

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution of Mauritius, *Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom of the Individuals*, Article 3, 4, 7 & 16

<sup>2</sup>*Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 1, 2, 3, 5 & 7*

- 2.3. **Award participants are aged between 14 and 24. For the purposes of the Award, all Award participants are considered to be either a child or young person when considering how they should be treated in regard to contact with adults.**
- 2.4 The purpose of the policy is to enable all children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the best outcomes from their Award experience, regardless of sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion or gender reassignment.
- 2.5 The Children's Act 2020<sup>3</sup> of Mauritius defines child safeguarding to specifically encompass all forms of harm including physical abuse, sexual abuse, online abuse, child sexual exploitation, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse and commercial exploitation. It covers all children but those who have additional vulnerabilities (for example, children with disabilities, unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking/modern slavery) will require additional safeguarding considerations.
- 2.6 Based on the UN's guidance, in safeguarding terms a child is defined as any person below the age of eighteen years
- 2.7 A vulnerable adult (or 'adults at risk') means any person aged 18 or over who is or may be in need of care and support (e.g. health care, relevant personal care or social care) and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and, as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk or experience of neglect or abuse. In the context of the Award, it is important to note that typically (but not exclusively) vulnerable adults would only be engaged in the Award as beneficiaries where Award participants are volunteering their time to support them.
- 2.8 In the context of the Award, to ensure we can have the highest standards of safeguarding processes and protocols, all children, young people and vulnerable adults should be protected on the basis of the Mauritian Law.
- 2.9. Almost 500 adults are engaged in Award related activities that bring them into contact, regularly or from time to time, with children, young people and vulnerable adults. These "Adults in the Award" include paid staff and volunteers acting as Award Supervisors, Award Leaders, Adventurous Journey Assessors, Activity Assessors and volunteers. In the context of the Award, an 'adult' volunteer or paid employee is defined as anyone over the age of 18.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Children's Act 2020, Part III – Offences against Children, No 11, 13, 14, 19, 26 & 28, Part IV-Children in need of Assistance, and Care and Protection, No 31, 32, 34, Sub-Part II – Care and Protection Orders, No 36*

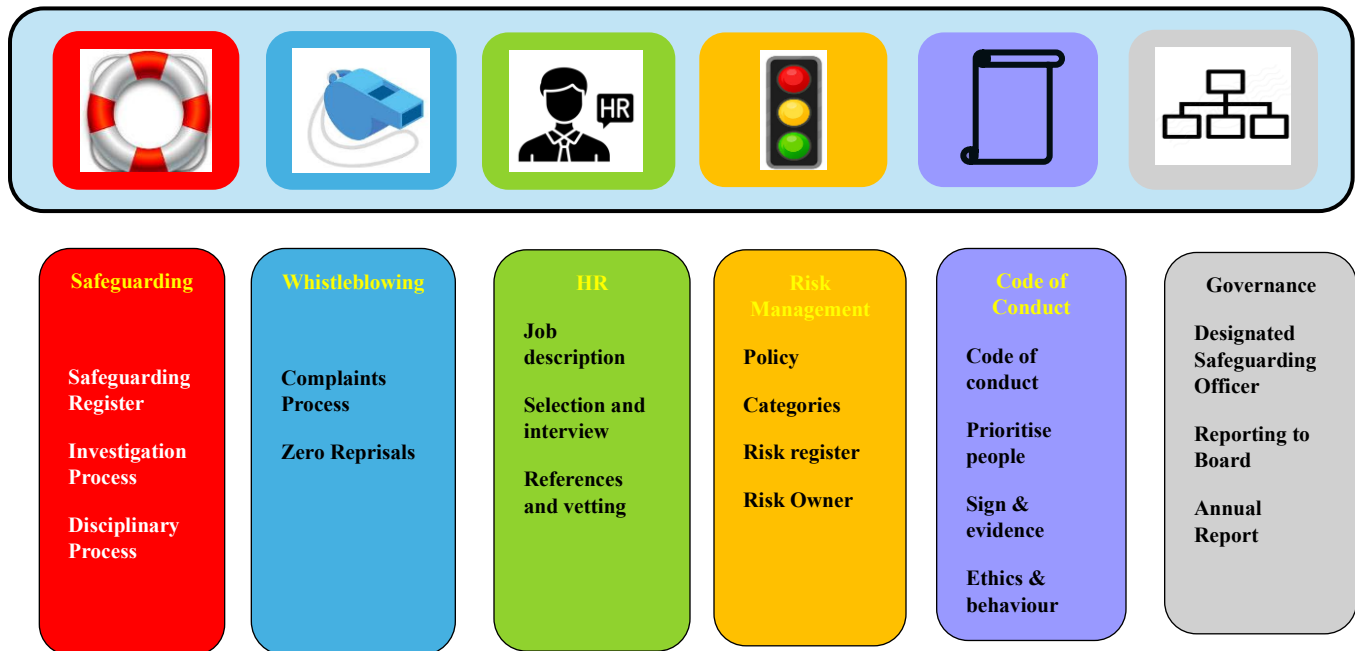
- 2.10. Award participants may engage with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults during the course of their Award. In this case, an Award participant, even if aged under 18, must adhere to the standards of conduct described in this policy and expected of an adult engaged in Award related activity.
- 2.11. It is important to note that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may occupy the role of Award participant and Adult in the Award concurrently.
- 2.12. ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius*** and licensed Operating Partner and Award Centres approach to safeguarding are underpinned by the following principles:
- Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding
  - Do not create any situation that may lead to harm
  - Act in the best interests of the child/young person/vulnerable adult
  - All children, young people and vulnerable adults shall be treated equally, irrespective of race, gender, religion/or none, sexual orientation or disability
  - Safeguarding should be embedded in all of our activities as an organization

### **3 Safeguarding framework**

- 3.1 ***The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius*** approach to maintain a safe, positive and empowering environment for youth development is encompassed in a safeguarding framework comprising six core areas. The framework and principles outlined within it are aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

3.2 The framework sets out the key responsibilities and requirements for any licensed Award Operator and can be summarised in the following graphic:

A summary overview of the six areas in the new safeguarding due diligence



## 1. General safeguarding and child safeguarding

Safeguarding shapes the approach, practice and culture of *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Mauritius* and all licensed Operating Partner and Award Centres, ensuring a comprehensively safe environment for all people who come into contact with the Award, including adults, children, young people and vulnerable adults. Operating Partner and Award Centres should be able to demonstrate:

- I. Safeguarding policy/policies – Children's Act 2020 is in place.
- II. Serious Incident Reporting policy
- III. A Safeguarding Register/Occurrence Book
- IV. Appropriate investigation processes
- V. A disciplinary process

## 2. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing allows concerns to be raised and resolved at the appropriate level. The **Operating and Award Centres** should be able to demonstrate:

- i. Whistleblowing policy
- ii. A complaint process
- iii. Commitment to no reprisals

## 3. Human Resources

Recruitment and vetting processes should support recruitment of the right people, and safeguarding training should be provided for all staff and volunteers. The **Operating Partner and Award Centres** should be able to demonstrate that Award Coordinators and Award Leaders must:

- I. Have clear job descriptions as an Award Leader
- II. Be 18 yrs+
- III. Be appropriately vetted (Character certificate)
- IV. Be aware of and committed to the vision and values of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award
- V. Be compliant with Children's Act 2020
- VI. Follow safeguarding online training on award community platform

## 4. Risk management

A risk management framework must set out **The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Mauritius** approach to risk identification and assessment. The **Operating Partner and award Centres** should be able to:

- I. Conduct risk assessments for all Award activities (e.g adventurous journeys) ensuring that all potential dangers are identified and mitigated
- II. Tailor emergency evacuation plan for specific risks of each activity
- III. Ensure that all participants have access to necessary safety equipment, such as first aid kit
- IV. Regularly inspect and maintain all equipment to ensure it is in good working order and fit for purpose

## 5. Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct describes the ethics and behaviours required of all individuals, to ensure a robust safeguarding environment. Operating Partner and Award Centres should be able to demonstrate:



- I. Adoption of the Award Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1, below – this is a minimum) by all staff, volunteers and, where applicable, children/young people/vulnerable adults.
- II. An operating environment that supports Adults in the Award to adhere to the standards of the Code of Conduct, as a minimum.

## 6. Governance and accountability

The National Award Committee has ultimate responsibility for the safeguarding of its Award participants, staff and volunteers. It is vital that the Board is independent in its safeguarding decision making. *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius* should be able to demonstrate:

- I. A safeguarding lead designated by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation at Board level. Mr Ashok Cheetamun has been nominated for same.
- II. Evidence of regular engagement between the designated safeguarding lead and the management of the organisation; evidence of regular reporting could be a standing agenda item in meetings, or through the regular updates to the risk register

## 4. Code of conduct

- 4.1 *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius* has adopted the Code of Conduct of the Foundation regarding safeguarding, see Appendix 1. It describes what behaviors *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Mauritius* expects of individuals and the organisations to which they belong.
- 4.2 All Adults in the Award, regardless of appointment or role, are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct and treat it as a description of a minimum standard of behaviour.
- 4.3 Every Adult in the Award, and every Award participant working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, should be provided with a copy of this Code of Conduct as part of their induction to the Award.
- 4.4 It is a requirement that, as a minimum, all Adults in the Award, sign the Code of Conduct and where appropriate take a refresher version of the e-learning safeguarding guidance.

## 5 Safeguarding due diligence

- 5.1 *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Mauritius* conducts due diligence when selecting organisations and individuals with whom to partner with and license to deliver the Award. This is based on the licensing application and evaluation process.
- 5.2 This policy requires Operating Partners and individual Award Centres to undertake due diligence when selecting organisations and individuals with whom to partner to deliver Award activity.

## 6 Reporting procedures

- 6.1 To respond to any incident or incidents of actual, suspected or alleged exploitation, abuse, harassment or bullying that arise:
- I. In the first instance the incident should be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, should that be appropriate or the National Director of *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius*.
  - II. Necessary immediate actions should be taken to remove any actual or alleged victim from threat of imminent (further) harm.
  - III. If applicable, any incident of concern should also be reported in accordance with the Serious Incident Reporting Policy and associated procedures.
- 6.2 Any contravention of the Safeguarding Policy, or any of the elements of the Safeguarding Framework, should be reported to the National Director of *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius*.
- 6.3 If the incident is serious (as defined by the Serious Incident Reporting Policy) this should be reported to the Safeguard Lead designated by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation.

## 7 General complaints

- 7.1 The Safeguarding Policy, and the associated Serious Incident Reporting Policy and serious incident reporting procedure, are independent from and do not affect *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award –Mauritius* complaints procedure. In the event that a stakeholder wishes to make a complaint to *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius* in relation to the handling of a safeguarding concern or the response to a concern, the complaints procedure should be pursued independently of the SIR procedure.
- 7.2 The complaints procedure is as captured on *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Mauritius* Complaints Policy

- 8 **Anything that may not be covered in this document, the Law of Mauritius will prevail.**

## **Appendix 1. Code of Conduct**

It is the policy of *The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award* to safeguard the welfare and well being of the young people who participate in the Award, by protecting them from abuse, from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

All adults engaged with the Award have a duty to report concerns or suspicions and a right to do so in confidence and free from harassment.

The Code of Conduct is applicable to in-person, online, social media and virtual situations.

### **ALWAYS:-**

- ALWAYS treat everyone with respect
- ALWAYS provide the example you wish others to follow
- ALWAYS plan activities that involve groups of three or more- or at least which are within sight or hearing of others
- ALWAYS respect everyone's right to personal privacy
- ALWAYS provide access for young people to talk to others about any concerns they may have
- ALWAYS encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- ALWAYS avoid situations that compromise or are unacceptable within your relationship of trust with young people
- ALWAYS remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- ALWAYS recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments, such as dealing with bullying, bereavement, or abuse
- ALWAYS abide to the instructions issued by the responsible officer

### **NEVER:-**

- NEVER permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. bullying)
- NEVER have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- NEVER jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- NEVER exaggerate or trivialise child-abuse and child protection issues
- NEVER show favouritism to any individual
- NEVER make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun
- NEVER believe "it could never happen to me"