



Core
Standard

Discrimination & Harassment-free WWF

WWF Core Standard

Version 1.1 – December 2025

Owners: Senior Director, Accountability, WWF International
Executive Director, People & Culture, WWF International

This Standard is subject to review on a regular basis and at least every 3 years.

VERSION HISTORY:

Version	Title	Released
V1.0	WWF Network Standard, Discrimination and Harassment-free WWF	June 2018 (endorsed by WWF International Board). Re-endorsed by WWF International Board and designated as a Core Standard Sept 2020
V1.1	WWF Core Standard, Discrimination and Harassment-free WWF Updates made to references, links and job titles. Minor rephrasing for consistency with other Core Standards.	December 2025

1. Purpose and Scope

Purpose

This WWF Core Standard ("Standard") sets out principles and minimum expectations to safeguard WWF Staff, or groups who have contact with, or are impacted by, WWF's activities, from discrimination and harassment.

WWF is committed to fostering a culture of dignity and respect and in line with our values across all aspects of our operations. Discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and any form of violence have no place in our organisation. WWF will take all reasonable steps to prevent, address, and respond promptly to such behaviour, whether it involves WWF Staff or anyone they engage with in their work (including partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries, volunteers, interns, or supporters).

Scope

The Standard applies to all WWF Offices and all WWF Staff, subject to local laws. WWF Offices may adapt the Standard to local contexts, ensuring alignment with the commitments and minimum expectations as set out in the Standard.

2. Core Requirements for All WWF Offices

Every WWF Office **MUST**, at a minimum:

2.1 Establish Clear Local Requirements

- **Adopt and maintain appropriate policies and procedures** aligned with this Standard and local legislation (whichever offers stronger protections). These must clearly define expected standards of personal conduct and be easily accessible in languages understood by all staff.
- **Clearly communicate the policies and procedures, and available complaints reporting channels** to staff, partners, and external stakeholders, using appropriate methods.

2.2 Recruit, induct, and train staff to promote respectful behaviour

- Managers and People and Culture **exercise due diligence in recruitment**, including assessing an applicant's integrity and performing background/reference checks.
- Provide **induction** on the policy/ code of conduct to all Staff, volunteers and board members, who must acknowledge their **understanding and commitment to the policy**.
- Provide **training** to Staff and relevant volunteers, which should cover expected conduct, recognising unacceptable behaviour, how to raise concerns, and accountability measures as part of performance management.
- Establish staff capacity to **provide advice and receive concerns** related to discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

2.3 Partner and supplier commitment to ethical and safeguarding principles

- Require partners and suppliers to contractually commit to safeguard their staff and workplaces from discrimination and harassment.
- Support partners and suppliers in building awareness and capacity where needed.

2.4 Identify and Manage Discrimination and Harassment Risks

- **Plan and prepare for high-risk situations**, such as remote fieldwork, travel, or overnight stays, by proactively managing risks and providing safeguards.
- **Integrate discrimination and harassment risks** into office and project-level risk management processes.

2.5 Encourage a “Speak Up” environment, and Respond Fairly and Promptly to Concerns, in line with the [Speak Up Core Standard](#) and [Safeguard on Grievance Mechanisms](#)

(For the full requirements, refer to these Standards).

- Provide accessible, safe, and culturally **appropriate reporting channels** in line with the [WWF Speak Up Core Standard](#).
- Ensure that Staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, and communities can **easily report** concerns, including through verbal reporting options where necessary.
- Offices must promptly inform WWF International of allegations that have the **potential to impact the global brand** via the secure [Global reporting system](#). In addition, Offices can inform the WWF International Chief Operations Officer, Senior Director Accountability, or Director Workplace Investigations.
- **Uphold a duty of care** to all parties involved, including complainants, witnesses, and those accused, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring they are treated fairly and protected throughout the investigation process.
- Implement appropriate **actions and remedies** based on investigation findings. Apply **disciplinary measures**, up to and including termination and legal action, where misconduct is confirmed.

2.6 Monitor and Continuously Improve

- Monitor the implementation of this Standard and provide updates to the WWF Network as requested.
- Share good practices and lessons learned across the Network to support continuous improvement.

3. Responsibilities

All WWF staff are responsible for upholding this Standard, speaking up if they witness inappropriate behaviour, and cooperating with investigations.

WWF Office Leaders are accountable for ensuring full implementation of this Standard and should seek guidance where local complexities arise.

WWF International will monitor compliance across the Network and may request information to support global oversight.

Global Communications will coordinate responses if issues become the focus of international media attention.

4. Guidance, Support and Other Relevant Standards

- [WWF Values](#)
- [WWF Core Standards](#)
- [WWF Speak Up Standard](#)
- Global Reporting Channel: wwfinternational.ethicspoint.com

Annex - Definitions

Bullying includes conduct, where repeated or occurring as part of a pattern of behaviour that includes physical assault of any kind, threats of harm, and/or psychological harassment or intimidation.

Harassment is behaviour that is unwelcome, unreciprocated, uninvited and usually repeated. It includes misconduct or abuse of power that interferes with another's ability to perform his/her work.

Sexual harassment is any physical, visual, verbal or non-verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature which is unwelcome, non-consensual, usually repeated, and which can include (but not limited to):

- Demands for sexual favours
- Pervasive offensive or demeaning comments, jokes and innuendo
- Sexual propositions or advances
- Displaying, sending, emailing or downloading offensive material
- Remarks about a person's sexual activities
- Physical contact (e.g. kissing, touching, patting or brushing against a person)
- A direct or implied threat, benefit or promise

Sexual Harassment does not include sexual interaction, flirtation, attraction or friendship that is invited, mutual, consensual and reciprocated.

Discrimination is the less favourable treatment of an individual or group that is made on the basis of a certain attribute, in comparison with treatment of another individual or group without that attribute, including, but not limited to:

- Age
- Family responsibilities, family/marital/parental status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, status as a parent or carer
- Intellectual, physical or psychiatric Impairment or Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation/preference
- Physical features
- Medical/health situation
- Race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or nationality
- Religious belief/activity
- Political belief/activity

Occupational Violence: Incidents where an employee is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace.

“Workplace” includes work related events such as work related functions, meetings, conferences, field work etc.

Staff: all employees engaged by a WWF Office.

(Associated) Third-Parties: Individuals and entities that work with WWF, including grantees, consultants, vendors, suppliers, partners.

‘Offices’ include National Organisations and their affiliated offices, and WWF International and its reporting offices unless specified otherwise.

Office Leaders: The most senior leadership group in an office.