



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Glossary Items

Term	Definition
Child	Any person under the age of 18 years, as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
Child Abuse	Any act or failure to act that results in harm to a child, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, or trafficking.
Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)	A framework that aims to achieve both gender equality, meaning equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and social inclusion, ensuring that marginalized groups within a society are actively included and can fully participate in all aspects of life, addressing inequalities based on factors like caste, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation;
Safeguarding	The process of protecting children from harm, abuse, and exploitation, and promoting their welfare.
Impact	Any change to the environment or to its component that may affect human health or safety, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, climate, natural or cultural heritage, other physical structure, or in general, subsequently alters environmental, social, economic, or cultural conditions.
Participation	A key process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.
Precautionary Approach	Means that where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental and social damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
Safeguards	Sets of principles, rules and procedures put in place to achieve social and environmental goals by avoiding negative impacts and promoting co-benefits.
Safeguarding Concern	Any situation where a child may be at risk of harm or abuse, whether intentional or unintentional, arising from CES activities or interactions.
Screening	The process that decides whether a project requires assessment, and the level of assessment that may be required.
Stakeholders	Persons or groups who are affected by or can affect the outcome of a project e.g. affected communities, local organizations, civil society organizations, government and government agencies, politicians, private sector, academia, and the media.
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)- Article 19	States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide

	necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.
CFAs,	Community Forests Associations are as defined by the Forest Conservation and Management Act, no.34 of 2016
WRUAs,	Water Resource Users Associations are as defined by the Water Act 2016
CWCAs	Community Wildlife Conservancies Associations are as defined by the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act Chapter 376
PLWDS	People Living with Disabilities as defined by The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2003 in Kenya which protects the rights of people with disabilities.
CSOS	Civil Society Organizations are organizations that play a significant role in advocating for policy change, providing essential services to marginalized communities, and holding the government accountable.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Centre for Environmental Stewardship (CES)

Centre for Environmental Stewardship (CES) is a national Kenyan Public Benefit Organization (PBO). It was founded in the year 2003 by a team of professionals in the fields of environment, biodiversity, natural resources management, health and theology. From its inception in 2003, CES has had an impact-level history. This has been through influencing behaviour change to create environmental stewards and supporting local communities to sustainably manage their environment for improved livelihoods. Sustainable landscape and ecosystem restoration is critical for addressing environmental degradation, pollution, biodiversity loss, climate change and loss of livelihoods. The goal of CES is to accelerate approaches that address the key drivers of degradation in Forests, Agro-ecosystems, Rangelands, and Wetlands to prevent, halt and reverse landscape and ecosystem degradation and improve livelihoods. CES seeks to address these through its four pillars. i.e., Institutional strengthening, Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration, Advocacy and Nature Based Enterprises for improved livelihoods.

Environmental stewardship and child protection are deeply intertwined because the health, safety, and well-being of children depend significantly on the state of the environment. By prioritizing sustainability, CES not only addresses immediate threats to children's lives but also lays the foundation for a more equitable and resilient future. Collaborative efforts across sectors—such as education, policy-making, community engagement, and advocacy—are essential to achieving meaningful progress in both areas.

1.2 Why child protection is crucial to CES' work.

Child protection is crucial to the Centre for Environmental Stewardship's (CES) work because it underpins the organization's mission, values, and operational goals as outlined in its Strategic Plan for 2025-2029. CES is committed to promoting a society that manages its environment and natural resources sustainably through institutional strengthening, landscape and ecosystem restoration, advocacy, and nature-based enterprises for improved livelihoods. Children, as current and future members of the communities CES serves, are integral to achieving this vision. Ensuring their safety, well-being, and empowerment aligns with CES's principles of inclusivity, participation, and equity, while also addressing legal, ethical, and practical imperatives.

1.3 Key reasons why child protection is essential to CES's work

Child protection and safeguarding is crucial to CES's work because it safeguards the well-being of a key demographic—children—within its target communities, ensuring they can safely participate in and benefit from its environmental and livelihood initiatives. It aligns with CES's values of inclusivity, participation, and accountability, supports its programmatic goals, and fulfills legal and ethical obligations. By protecting children, CES enhances community trust, strengthens partnerships, and builds a foundation for sustainable environmental stewardship across generations. Without a child protection and safeguarding framework, CES risks undermining its mission, damaging its reputation, and failing the very communities it seeks

to empower. Integrating child safeguards as proposed in the formal policy, is thus not just a necessity but a strategic enabler of CES's vision for 2025-2029 and beyond.

1. Alignment with CES's Vision and Mission

- ✓ **Vision:** CES envisions "a society that manages its environment and natural resources sustainably". Children are the next generation of environmental stewards who will inherit and sustain this society. Protecting them ensures they can grow up healthy, educated, and empowered to continue CES's work.
- ✓ **Mission:** CES promotes "optimal best practices in Sustainable Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration" through community-focused approaches. Children are part of these communities, often participating in or affected by CES programs (e.g., education seminars, tree planting). Safeguarding them ensures the mission's success by fostering trust and participation.
- ✓ **Relevance:** Without protecting children, CES risks undermining its long-term goal of sustainable environmental management, as harm to children could disrupt community cohesion and future leadership.

2. Focus on Vulnerable Groups, Including Youth

- ✓ **Target Groups:** CES explicitly targets women and youth-led institutions (e.g., CFAs, WRUAs, CWCAs, pastoralist networks, farmer groups). While "youth" may primarily refer to older teens and young adults, children are often indirectly involved through family or community activities, especially in education and livelihood programs (e.g., CES SP, Activity 1.1.5: exchange visits).
- ✓ **Vulnerability:** The Strategic Plan highlights how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized groups, such as women and girls (CES SP, Section 2.1.4), who face increased burdens during crises like drought or floods. Children, particularly girls, are similarly vulnerable, facing risks like gender-based violence, school dropout, or exploitation (UN-Women 2023 reference in Section 2.1.4, CES SP). Child protection mitigates these risks, ensuring CES's interventions benefit all community members.
- ✓ **Empowerment:** CES aims to build "skilled, engaged, and informed" youth-led institutions (CES SP, Objective 1.1). Protecting children ensures they can safely participate and develop into the empowered leaders CES envisions.

3. Core Values Demand Protection and Inclusion

- ✓ **Inclusiveness and Participation:** CES's core values include fostering a "culture of inclusiveness" and "participation". Children must be included in age-appropriate ways (e.g., through environmental education, CES SP, Activity 1.1.4), but this inclusion requires safeguarding to prevent exploitation or harm.
- ✓ **Transparency and Accountability:** CES commits to transparency and accountability (CES SP, Section 1.2). Failing to protect children could damage trust with communities, partners, and donors, undermining CES's credibility. A child protection policy demonstrates accountability to stakeholders.

- ✓ **Equity:** The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) focus (CES SP, Section 2.1.4) extends to ensuring children—especially those with disabilities (PLWDs) or from marginalized groups—benefit from CES programs without facing discrimination or risk.

4. Programmatic Relevance and Risks

- **Program Activities:** CES’s Strategic Pillars involve hands-on community engagement:
 - ✓ **Landscape Restoration (Pillar 2):** Activities like tree planting (CES SP, Activity 2.1.1) or rangeland restoration could involve children, exposing them to physical risks (e.g., tools, harsh conditions) if not properly supervised.
 - ✓ **Education and Advocacy (Pillars 1 and 3):** Seminars, forums (CES SP, Activity 1.1.3), and advocacy training (CES SP, Activity 3.1.4) may include children from schools or youth groups, requiring safe environments free from abuse or coercion.
 - ✓ **Nature-Based Enterprises (Pillar 4):** Projects like ecotourism or apiculture (CES SP, Activity 4.1.1) could involve children in family enterprises, necessitating protection from exploitation, overwork or injury.
- **Risks Without Safeguarding:** Unprotected children could face physical harm, emotional distress, or exploitation (e.g., labor in restoration projects), contradicting CES’s goal of improving livelihoods and well-being (Specific Goal 4).
- **Mitigation:** Child protection ensures these activities enhance children’s development (e.g., skills, environmental awareness) rather than endanger them, aligning with CES’s outcomes (CES SP, Section 4.1).

5. Enhancing Community Trust and Partnerships

- ✓ **Community Engagement:** CES relies on community support and participation. Protecting children builds trust with families, ensuring parents feel safe allowing their children to join CES initiatives (e.g., CES SP, Output 5: exchange visits).
- ✓ **Partnerships:** Partners like CSOs, private sector entities, and government departments (e.g., KFS, NEMA) (Section 2.1.4) expect CES to uphold high standards. A robust child protection approach strengthens collaboration and aligns with donor priorities (CES SP, Section 6.2), reducing reputational risks (CES SP, Section 4.4.2: Reputational Risks).
- ✓ **Sustainability:** CES’s goal of long-term environmental and livelihood sustainability (Executive Summary) depends on community goodwill, which could erode if children are harmed or neglected in its programs.

6. Addressing Broader Environmental and Social Challenges

- ✓ **Planetary Emergencies:** CES acknowledges the "unprecedented and disproportionate impacts" of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution (CES SP, Section 1.1). Children are particularly vulnerable to these crises (e.g., health risks from heatwaves or vector-borne diseases, CES SP, Section 2.1.4), and protection measures ensure they can adapt and thrive amidst these challenges.

- ✓ **Education and Resilience:** By safeguarding children while educating them about environmental stewardship (e.g., CES SP, Activity 2.2.3: virtual education), CES builds resilient future generations capable of addressing these crises, directly supporting its broad goal (CES SP, Section 1.2).

7. Preventing and Responding to Harm

- ✓ **Risk Context:** CES operates in areas like Kajiado, Tharaka Nithi, and Meru (CES SP, Section 1.4), where environmental degradation and poverty may heighten risks for children (e.g. trafficking, child labor during economic shocks). Programs involving physical labor (e.g., CES SP, Output 19: planting 50,000 seedlings) or public events (e.g., Output 3: forums) could expose children to harm without safeguards.
- ✓ **Proactive Measures:** Child protection prevents such risks, ensuring CES's work does not exacerbate vulnerabilities. It also provides a framework to respond to incidents (e.g., abuse by staff or partners), maintaining program integrity (CES SP, Section 4.4.2: Risk Mitigation).

8. Legal and Ethical Obligations

- ✓ **National Laws:** Kenya's Children Act (2001) mandates the protection of children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, requiring organizations like CES to comply when engaging with communities that include children.
- ✓ **International Standards:** CES aligns with global frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Section 2.1.3), particularly SDG 4 (education), SDG 5 (gender equality), and SDG 16 (peace and justice), which emphasize child safety and well-being. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) further obligates CES to protect children's rights to survival, development, and participation (Articles 6, 12, 19).
- ✓ **Ethical Duty:** As a Public Benefit Organization (PBO) (CES SP, Section 1.1), CES has a moral responsibility to "do no harm," especially to vulnerable populations like children, ensuring its environmental work does not inadvertently cause social harm.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the safety, well-being, and rights of children involved in or affected by the activities of CES. While CES' primary focus is on landscape and ecosystem restoration, CES' recognizes that children may interact with its projects, staff, volunteers, or partners. This policy outlines CES' commitments to protecting children from harm and abuse, promoting their welfare, and ensuring they are treated with respect and dignity. Further, the policy elaborates the key ways in which environmental stewardship and child protection are interconnected.

3.0 Policy Statement

CES is dedicated to:

- ✓ Ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of all children involved in or affected by its programs.
- ✓ Embedding child safeguards into its core values of inclusiveness, participation, transparency, and accountability (CES SP- 2025-2029, Section 1.2).
- ✓ Complying with national laws (e.g., Kenya’s Children Act, 2001) and international standards (e.g., CRC, UN Sustainable Development Goals).
- ✓ Fostering an environment where children can thrive as environmental stewards while being protected from harm.

4.0 Principles

This policy is guided by:

- ✓ **Best Interests of the Child:** All actions prioritize the child’s well-being (CRC Article 3).
- ✓ **Non-Discrimination:** Equal protection and opportunities for all children, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (CRC Article 2).
- ✓ **Participation:** Children’s voices are heard and respected in matters affecting them (CRC Article 12).
- ✓ **Zero Tolerance:** CES has zero tolerance for child abuse, exploitation, or neglect by staff and stakeholders.
- ✓ **Prevention and Response:** Proactive measures to prevent harm and swift, confidential responses to safeguarding concerns.

5.0 Environmental stewardship and child protection interconnectedness.

1. Health Impacts of Environmental Degradation

- ✓ *Air and Water Quality:* Poor air and water quality caused by pollution can lead to respiratory diseases, developmental delays, and other health issues in children. Environmental stewardship involves protecting natural resources, which directly contributes to safeguarding children's health.
- ✓ *Exposure to Toxic Substances:* Children are particularly vulnerable to toxic substances like lead, pesticides, and industrial chemicals. Protecting the environment helps reduce exposure to harmful pollutants that can harm their development.

2. Climate Change and Vulnerability

- ✓ *Natural Disasters:* Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and droughts, which disproportionately affect children. These events often result in displacement, loss of homes, and disruptions in education and healthcare services.
- ✓ *Food Security:* Climate-related challenges impact agriculture and food supply chains, leading to malnutrition and hunger among children, especially in vulnerable communities.

3. Safe Spaces for Play and Development

- ✓ *Access to Green Spaces:* Environmental stewardship promotes the preservation of parks, forests, and other green spaces where children can play, learn, and grow physically and emotionally. Access to nature has been shown to improve mental health, cognitive development, and overall well-being in children.
- ✓ *Urban Planning:* Sustainable urban planning ensures safe environments for children by reducing traffic hazards, improving air quality, and creating walkways with access to recreational areas.

4. Education and Awareness

- ✓ *Environmental Education:* Teaching children about sustainability and conservation fosters a sense of responsibility toward the planet. This education also empowers them to advocate for their rights, including the right to live in a clean and healthy environment.
- ✓ *Holistic Child Development:* Understanding the relationship between human actions and environmental impacts is crucial for developing critical thinking skills and ethical values in children, which aligns with child protection goals.

5. Economic Stability and Social Justice

- ✓ *Poverty Alleviation:* Environmental degradation often exacerbates poverty, which increases risks for child exploitation, abuse, and neglect. By promoting sustainable practices, environmental stewardship supports economic stability and reduces inequality, thereby enhancing child protection efforts.
- ✓ *Indigenous Rights:* Many indigenous communities rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods and cultural identity. Protecting their lands and ecosystems safeguards their children's futures and upholds their rights.

6. Legal Frameworks and Policy Integration

- ✓ *International Agreements:* Global frameworks like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Paris Agreement on climate change recognize the importance of protecting children from environmental harm. Integrating these agreements into national policies strengthens both child protection and environmental stewardship initiatives.
- ✓ *Legislation:* Laws designed to protect the environment often have provisions that indirectly or directly benefit children, such as regulations on waste management, water treatment, and land use.

7. Intergenerational Equity

- ✓ *Future Generations:* Environmental stewardship is fundamentally about preserving the Earth for future generations. Child protection shares this forward-looking perspective, emphasizing the need to create a world where all children can thrive, regardless of when they are born.

6.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, consultants, partners of CES, including visitors, donors, and suppliers and other stakeholders regardless of their

location, who may interact with children. It also extends to any individuals who represent or work on behalf of the organization, including during project implementation, community engagement, and outreach activities.

7.0 Expectations of CES partners, collaborators, stakeholders and individuals in interacting with children within CES's programs.

7.1 CES Programs

CES Programs are: -

- ✓ Institutional Strengthening
- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Landscapes and Ecosystems Restoration within targeted areas (Forests, Agro-Ecosystems, Rangelands, and Wetlands)
- ✓ Nature Based Enterprises for Improved Community Livelihoods

7.2 Expectations of CES partners, collaborators, stakeholders and individuals in interacting with children within CES's programs.

CES's partners, stakeholders, and individuals are expected to interact with children in ways that align with the organization's goals of empowerment, education, and inclusivity, while adhering to national and international child protection standards. This includes ensuring safety, promoting participation, providing education, upholding non-discrimination, acting in children's best interests, implementing safeguards, ensuring accountability, and engaging communities. To fully meet these expectations, CES has explicitly incorporated child safeguards into its Strategic Plan, reflecting both its values and global best practices.

The expectations of CES partners, collaborators, stakeholders and individuals align with CES's mission, values, and focus on inclusivity, community engagement, and youth empowerment, while adhering to global best practices for safeguarding children. These expectations include:

1. Ensuring Safety and Protection

- ✓ **Expectation:** Partners, stakeholders, and individuals must prioritize children's physical, emotional, and psychological safety in all CES activities, preventing harm from abuse, exploitation, or unsafe environments.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** The CES Strategic Plan's (2025-2029) commitment to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) (Section 2.1.4) and addressing vulnerabilities (e.g. women's increased burden during environmental crises) implies a protective stance toward all community members, including children.
- ✓ **International Standard:** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Article 19) mandates protection from all forms of violence, while Keeping Children Safe requires organizations to assess and mitigate risks to children.

- ✓ **Application:** For example, during tree-planting events (CES SP, Activity 2.1.1), adults must ensure tools are safe for children to use, supervision is adequate, and activities occur in secure locations free from hazards.

2. Promoting Child Participation and Empowerment

- ✓ **Expectation:** Children should be actively involved in age-appropriate ways, encouraged to share ideas, and empowered to become environmental stewards, aligning with CES's focus on youth engagement.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** Objectives like building "skilled, engaged, and informed" youth-led institutions (CES SP- 2025-2029, Objective 1.1) and creating forums for exchanging skills (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 1.1.3) suggest children could participate in educational or restoration activities.
- ✓ **International Standard:** CRC Article 12 ensures children's right to express views on matters affecting them, and UNICEF emphasizes meaningful participation.
- ✓ **Application:** In advocacy training (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 3.1.4), older children could be given roles to voice community concerns, while younger ones might contribute through school-based projects.

3. Providing Education and Skill Development

- ✓ **Expectation:** Interactions should educate children about environmental issues (e.g., climate change, biodiversity) and equip them with practical skills (e.g., planting trees, managing nature-based enterprises), tailored to their age and capacity.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** CES conducts environmental education seminars (Section 1.1) and aims to scale up virtual education opportunities (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 2.2.3), which could include children.
- ✓ **International Standard:** CRC Article 28 ensures the right to education, and safeguarding policies encourage skill-building to enhance resilience.
- ✓ **Application:** During exchange visits (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 1.1.5), children could learn best practices in sustainable agriculture or indigenous knowledge from peers in other counties.

4. Upholding Non-Discrimination and Inclusivity

- ✓ **Expectation:** All children, regardless of gender, disability, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity, must have equal access to CES programs, with special attention to marginalized groups.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** The CES Strategic Plan's (2025-2029) core value of "culture of inclusiveness" (Section 1.2) and GESI focus (Section 2.1.4) extend to ensuring equitable participation.
- ✓ **International Standard:** CRC Article 2 prohibits discrimination, and Keeping Children Safe emphasizes inclusion of vulnerable children (e.g., those with disabilities, PLWDs).
- ✓ **Application:** In nature-based enterprise training (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 4.1.4), CES partners should ensure girls, boys, and children with disabilities all have opportunities to learn skills like apiculture or ecotourism.

5. Acting in the Best Interests of the Child

- ✓ **Expectation:** Decisions and interactions must prioritize children’s well-being, balancing environmental goals with their health, education, and development needs.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** CES’s vision of a sustainable society (CES SP- 2025-2029, Section 1.2) and focus on improving livelihoods (Specific Goal 4) imply benefits for future generations, including children.
- ✓ **International Standard:** CRC Article 3 mandates that the child’s best interests be a primary consideration in all actions.
- ✓ **Application:** If children participate in rangeland restoration (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 2.1.1), partners should ensure activities don’t interfere with school hours or expose them to harsh conditions.

6. Implementing Safeguarding Policies and Training

- ✓ **Expectation:** Partners and stakeholders must adhere to a CES child safeguarding policy undergo training on child protection, and report any concerns about child welfare.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** CES’s commitment to transparency and accountability (CES SP- 2025-2029, Section 1.2) and capacity building (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 1.1.2) encompasses safeguarding training.
- ✓ **International Standard:** Keeping Children Safe requires a written child protection policy, and UNICEF mandates staff training and reporting mechanisms.
- ✓ **Application:** Before launching community resource centers (CES SP- 2025-2029, Activity 1.1.4), CES will train staff and volunteers on recognizing and responding to signs of abuse or neglect.

7. Establishing Accountability and Reporting Mechanisms

- ✓ **Expectation:** Individuals interacting with children must be accountable for their actions, with clear channels to report safeguarding incidents confidentially and promptly to CES leadership.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** The CES Strategic Plan’s (2025-2029) monitoring framework (Section 5) and emphasis on governance (Objective 3.1) suggest a structure for oversight that could include safeguarding.
- ✓ **International Standard:** Keeping Children Safe Standard 4 requires accessible reporting procedures, and CRC Article 34 emphasizes protection from exploitation.
- ✓ **Application:** During multi-stakeholder meetings (CES SP- 2025-2029, Output 7), CES could establish a hotline or designate a safeguarding officer to handle child-related concerns.

8. Engaging Families and Communities

- ✓ **Expectation:** Interactions with children should involve their families and communities to ensure support, consent, and alignment with local norms, enhancing program effectiveness and safety.
- ✓ **CES Basis:** CES works with community-led groups (CES SP, Section 3.2) and integrates indigenous knowledge (Objective 2.2), implying family involvement.

- ✓ **International Standard:** UNICEF’s community-based approach to safeguarding emphasizes collaboration with caregivers.
- ✓ **Application:** In ecotourism projects (Activity 4.1.1), partners should seek parental consent and involve families to ensure children’s participation is supported.

8.0 Commitments

The commitments solidify CES’s dedication to child protection and safeguarding, ensuring children are safe, valued, and empowered within its mission for 2025-2029. They provide a proactive, accountable framework that enhances CES’s credibility and community impact.

CES commits to safeguarding children as an integral part of its mission to foster a society that manages its environment and natural resources sustainably. The commitments ensure that children involved in or affected by CES programs are protected from harm, empowered to participate, and supported to thrive as future environmental stewards. They align with CES’s strategic pillars (Section 3.2) and uphold national laws (e.g., Kenya’s Children Act, 2001) and international standards (e.g., UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, SDGs, Section 2.1.3).

8.1 Zero Tolerance for Abuse

- ✓ CES adopts a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and exploitation. CES will not tolerate any behaviour that harms or endangers children.
- ✓ A commitment to safe recruitment and vetting which is crucial to all partners and donors.
- ✓ A commitment to strict recruitment procedures, for all hires to undergo thorough background checks, including police clearance and reference checks.
- ✓ A commitment to train all employees on child protection principles in accordance with the condition of employment as relates to this policy.
- ✓ Commitment to safe and ethical data and media use - whereby CES ensures that all photos, videos, and stories involving children are used ethically, with full informed consent from the child and guardian; and CES prohibits the use of children's images in any way that could compromise their dignity, safety, or well-being, and stating that CES, will enforce strict guidelines for digital safeguarding.
- ✓ A commitment on whistleblower protection. The CES Whistleblowing Mechanism provides a safe, confidential, and anonymous channel for staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, community members, and children (where appropriate) to report concerns related to child protection, safeguarding violations, or other misconduct (e.g., fraud, corruption, policy breaches) within CES programs.

8.2 Respect for Children’s Rights

- ✓ CES upholds the principles of the UNCRC, ensuring that children’s rights to survival, development, protection, and participation are respected in all its activities.

8.3 Safe Environment

- ✓ CES strives to create safe environments where children feel protected, valued, and empowered and to ensure that the children and community voices are heard without fear of harm or discrimination.

8.4 Accountability

- ✓ All individuals associated with CES are accountable for adhering to this policy and reporting any concerns about child protection promptly.

9.0 Responsibilities

9.1 Leadership and Management

Leadership is the linchpin in setting a culture of child protection and safeguarding at CES. By establishing a clear vision, modeling ethical behavior, embedding systems, allocating resources, ensuring accountability, engaging stakeholders, managing risks, and empowering participation, leaders transform safeguarding from a policy into a core organizational value. This role leverages the Strategic Plan's focus on governance (Pillar 1), community engagement (Pillars 2-4), and oversight (CES SP, Section 1.3) to protect children while advancing the mission.

Key Actions:

- ✓ Leaders can integrate child safeguarding into the Strategic Plan's core values (Section 1.2) and goals (Section 3.2), making it a non-negotiable priority. For example, they could mandate a Child Safeguarding Policy (Activity 1.2.3: develop organizational policies) to formalize this commitment.
- ✓ Leaders can adopt and enforce a Code of Conduct ensuring they visibly comply with rules like avoiding isolated interactions with children and reporting concerns promptly.
- ✓ Policy Development: Direct the creation and regular revision of a Child Safeguarding Policy (CES SP, Activity 1.2.3), as proposed earlier.
- ✓ Training: Mandate safeguarding training for all staff and partners (CES SP Activity 1.1.2: train on leadership and governance), ensuring it covers recognizing abuse and reporting procedures.
- ✓ Monitoring: Incorporate safeguarding indicators into CES's Monitoring Framework (Section 5), such as the number of incidents reported and resolved (Output 27-36).
- ✓ Appoint a Safeguarding Officer (CES SP, Activity 1.2.2: recruit talent) with a dedicated budget.
- ✓ Fund training sessions and establish a reporting hotline (CES SP, Output 7).
- ✓ Support community awareness programs via resource centers (CES SP, Activity 1.1.4)
- ✓ Set up a Safeguarding Committee to investigate incidents (proposed in Policy,, reporting to the Board (Activity 1.2.5: regular meetings).
- ✓ Publicize a confidential reporting process (e.g., hotline, Activity 1.1.6: build networks) and enforce disciplinary actions (e.g., termination for violations).
- ✓ Include safeguarding updates in annual organizational assessments (CES, Activity 1.2.1).
- ✓ Include safeguarding clauses in MOUs with partners.
- ✓ Train community leaders and youth groups on safeguarding ensuring grassroots buy-in.
- ✓ Advocate for child protection in policy dialogues.

- ✓ Conduct safeguarding risk assessments for all activities (CES SP, Section 4.4.1: Assumptions), e.g., ensuring supervision during tree planting (Activity 2.1.1).
- ✓ Develop response protocols, training staff to act decisively (CES SP, Activity 1.2.4: knowledge-management system).
- ✓ Involve older children in designing activities (e.g., advocacy strategies, Activity 3.1.1), with parental consent.
- ✓ Provide age-appropriate roles in restoration or enterprise projects (Objective 4.1), supervised by trained adults.

9.2 Provide training and resources to staff and partners on child protection and safeguarding issues.

The provision of training and resources on child protection issues is essential to CES's work because it equips staff and partners with the knowledge, skills, and tools to safeguard children effectively. Within the CES Strategic Plan 2025-2029, this role aligns with capacity building (Pillar 1), risk management (Section 4.4), and partnership strengthening (Section 2.1.4), ensuring CES's programs are safe, inclusive, and impactful. By building awareness, enhancing skills, ensuring consistency, empowering action, supporting compliance, mitigating risks, and fostering improvement, training and resources create a culture where child protection is a lived priority. This not only protects children but also reinforces CES's mission, values, and credibility, making it a cornerstone of achieving sustainable environmental stewardship and community well-being by 2029.

Key Actions

- ✓ Conduct mandatory training sessions on child rights (e.g., CRC Articles 19, 34), types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect), and CES-specific risks (e.g., physical hazards in tree planting, CES SP, Activity 2.1.1). Provide resources like safeguarding handbooks or e-learning modules (Activity 2.2.3: virtual education opportunities).
- ✓ Train staff and partners on risk mitigation (e.g., supervising children during restoration projects, CES SP, Output 19) and safe interaction protocols.
- ✓ Teach response skills, such as reporting incidents within 24 hours and providing first-line support to affected children.
- ✓ Distribute resources like incident reporting forms or a safeguarding checklist (CES SP, Activity 1.2.4: knowledge-management system).
- ✓ Deliver standardized training for all new hires, volunteers, and partners during induction (CES SP, Activity 1.2.2: recruit talent), with annual refreshers.
- ✓ Provide a CES Safeguarding Toolkit (e.g., policy, code of conduct, reporting procedures) to all stakeholders (CES SP, Activity 1.2.6: equip the Board with tools).
- ✓ Role-play scenarios (e.g., spotting abuse during a community forum, CES SP, Activity 1.1.3) to build confidence in applying safeguarding skills.
- ✓ Provide a confidential reporting hotline (Output 7) and clear escalation protocols, ensuring staff and partners feel supported.
- ✓ Require partners to attend CES-led safeguarding workshops (CES SP, Activity 1.1.2) as a condition of collaboration (e.g., MOUs, Section 2.1.4).
- ✓ Share resources like a Partner Safeguarding Guide, outlining CES expectations (CES SP Activity 1.1.6).

- ✓ Include modules on legal responsibilities (e.g., mandatory reporting of abuse) in training (CES SP, Activity 1.3.4: train on resource mobilization, expanded to safeguarding).
- ✓ Provide a compliance checklist referencing Kenyan laws and CRC principles (CES SP Activity 1.2.3: revise policies).
- ✓ Train on risk assessment (e.g., ensuring supervision during restoration, CES SP, Activity 2.1.1) and provide a risk management template (Section 4.4.1).
- ✓ Educate on safe recruitment (e.g., background checks, CES SP, Activity 1.2.2) to prevent hiring risks.
- ✓ Schedule annual refresher courses to address emerging issues (e.g., online safety for virtual education, CES SP, Activity 2.2.3).
- ✓ Update resources based on feedback from staff, partners, and communities (Section 1.6: stakeholder engagement).

9.3 Staff and Volunteers

Staff and volunteers are the backbone of child protection and safeguarding within CES, acting as the first line of defense, serving as safeguards, policy implementers, participation enablers, educators, reporters, responders, role models, and community liaisons. In the Strategic Plan, their role leverages CES's focus on capacity building (Pillar 1), community engagement (Pillars 2-4), and accountability (Section 1.2) to ensure children are safe and empowered in programs like restoration (Output 19) or enterprises (Objective 4.1). Without their active involvement, CES risks failing to protect children, undermining its mission and community trust. With their dedication, they translate safeguarding into action, supporting CES's vision of a sustainable, inclusive society where children thrive as contributors and future leaders.

Key Actions

- ✓ Monitor for physical hazards (e.g., unsafe tools during restoration, CES SP, Activity 2.1.1) or behavioral red flags (e.g., distress in children at exchange visits, Activity 1.1.5) and intervene to mitigate risks.
- ✓ Adhere to a Code of Conduct, such as maintaining group supervision and avoiding inappropriate contact during community events (CES SP, Activity 1.1.4).
- ✓ Follow reporting protocols, e.g., escalating concerns within 24 hours during a nursery project (CES SP, Activity 4.1.1).
- ✓ Supervise children during tree planting (CES SP, Activity 2.1.1) to ensure safety and engagement, using child-friendly tools and methods.
- ✓ Encourage input from older children in forums (CES SP, Activity 1.1.3), obtaining parental consent where needed.
- ✓ Teach children safety skills (e.g., avoiding risks in restoration sites) with environmental lessons (e.g., biodiversity, CES SP, Activity 2.2.1).
- ✓ Inform families about safeguarding during multi-stakeholder meetings (Output 7).
- ✓ Spot signs of abuse (e.g., fearfulness during ecotourism training, CES SP, Activity 4.1.1) and report to the Safeguarding Officer (Policy Section 8.1).
- ✓ Record observations systematically (CES SP, Activity 1.2.4: knowledge-management system).
- ✓ Offer comfort to a child reporting harm (e.g., during a forum, CES SP, Activity 1.1.3) and connect them to support services via the Safeguarding Officer.

- ✓ Help coordinate with families or authorities if abuse is confirmed (CES SP, Section 4.4.2: Risk Mitigation).
- ✓ Exhibit ethical interactions (e.g., group supervision, no favoritism) during rangeland restoration (CES SP, Activity 2.1.4).
- ✓ Participate in safeguarding training (Activity 1.1.2) to stay accountable.
- ✓ Train community volunteers on safeguarding during capacity sessions (Activity 1.1.2).
- ✓ Advocate for partners to adopt CES's standards (CES SP, Activity 1.1.6: build networks).

9.4 Partners and Stakeholders

Partners and stakeholders play an essential role in child protection and safeguarding within CES by extending its reach, collaborating on policy, ensuring safe programs, raising awareness, mitigating risks, responding to incidents, advocating for change, and modeling protective behaviors. In the CES Strategic Plan 2025-2029, their role leverages CES's partnership focus (Section 2.1.4), advocacy efforts (Pillar 3), and community engagement (Pillars 2-4) to create a comprehensive safeguarding network. Without their active participation, CES's ability to protect children across its national scope (Section 1.4) would be limited, risking its mission and credibility. With their commitment, they enhance CES's capacity to deliver inclusive, sustainable outcomes where children are safe, valued, and empowered to contribute to a thriving future.

Key Action

- ✓ Adopt CES's safeguarding standards (e.g., proposed Policy, Section 13) or align their policies with CES's, ensuring child safety in joint initiatives like rangeland restoration (Activity 2.1.4).
- ✓ Sign MOUs with CES that include safeguarding clauses committing to a Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Report incidents to CES's Safeguarding Officer during joint projects (e.g., ecotourism training, CES SP, Activity 4.1.1) as per reporting protocols.
- ✓ Provide trained personnel to supervise children during restoration efforts ensuring safe use of tools and environments.
- ✓ Fund safety equipment (e.g., gloves, hats) for children in enterprise projects aligning with CES's resource mobilization strategy.
- ✓ Integrate child protection messages into environmental education campaigns (e.g., via radio, CES SP, Activity 1.1.4) delivered by partners.
- ✓ Train community leaders (e.g., CFA members) on safeguarding during CES-led workshops.
- ✓ Conduct joint risk assessments with CES (e.g., for rangeland projects, CES SP, Activity 2.1.4) to identify hazards like unsafe conditions or exploitation.
- ✓ Share local insights (e.g., risks of child labor in agroforestry, CES SP, Activity 4.1.2) to inform CES's risk management (CES SP, Section 4.4.2).
- ✓ Report incidents observed during joint activities (e.g., abuse during a forum, CES SP, Activity 1.1.3) to CES's Safeguarding Officer.
- ✓ Provide legal or social support (e.g., via county governments, CES SP, Activity 2.1.2) if a child needs assistance post-incident.

- ✓ Lobby for child-friendly environmental policies (e.g., safe community participation) alongside CES
- ✓ Promote safeguarding in their own organizations, inspired by CES collaboration (CES SP, Activity 1.1.6).
- ✓ Demonstrate safe practices (e.g., group supervision) during CES events (CES SP, Activity 2.1.3).
- ✓ Participate in CES safeguarding training (CES SP, Activity 1.1.2) to align with its culture.

10.0 Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children

The Code of Conduct ensures that all interactions with children in CES programs are safe, respectful, and aligned with its mission. It protects children while enabling their participation, fostering a culture of trust and accountability that supports CES’s goals for 2025-2029.

The code of conduct is applicable to all CES staff, volunteers, consultants, partners (e.g., CSOs, private sector, government agencies), and stakeholders interacting with children in CES programs. Its Purpose is to ensure safe, respectful, and ethical interactions with children, protecting them from harm and fostering their participation as future environmental stewards.

1. CES Code of Conduct Guiding Principles

- ✓ **Safety:** Prioritize the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of children in all interactions.
- ✓ **Respect:** Treat every child with dignity, fairness, and respect, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, or background.
- ✓ **Participation:** Encourage children’s age-appropriate involvement in CES activities, valuing their voices and contributions.
- ✓ **Accountability:** Act responsibly and report any concerns to uphold CES’s commitment to child protection.
- ✓ **Zero Tolerance:** CES has zero tolerance for abuse, exploitation, neglect, or any behavior that harms children.

2. Expected Behaviors

When interacting with children in CES programs (e.g., tree planting, education seminars, enterprise training), all individuals must:

1. **Maintain Professional Boundaries:**
 - ✓ Engage with children in a professional, positive manner consistent with CES’s environmental and educational goals (e.g., teaching about biodiversity during restoration, CES SP, Activity 2.1.1).
 - ✓ Use respectful language and avoid comments or actions that could be misinterpreted or cause distress.
2. **Ensure Supervision and Safety:**
 - ✓ Conduct interactions in open, observable settings, avoiding one-on-one situations in isolated areas (e.g., work in groups during community forums, CES SP, Activity 1.1.3).

- ✓ Ensure adequate adult supervision (at least two adults present) during activities involving children (e.g., tree planting, CES SP, Output 19).
 - ✓ Use child-appropriate tools and methods (e.g., lightweight equipment) to prevent physical harm.
- 3. Obtain Consent:**
- ✓ Seek informed consent from parents or guardians before involving children in CES activities (e.g., exchange visits, CES SP, Activity 1.1.5), explaining the purpose and any risks.
 - ✓ Respect a child's right to decline participation without pressure or coercion.
- 4. Protect Privacy and Confidentiality:**
- ✓ Avoid sharing children's personal information (e.g., names, photos from ecotourism projects, CES SP, Activity 4.1.1) without parental consent.
 - ✓ Use images or stories responsibly, ensuring they promote dignity and align with CES's mission (CES SP, Section 1.2).
- 5. Encourage Participation:**
- ✓ Provide opportunities for children to share ideas or learn skills in a safe environment (e.g., contributing to advocacy strategies, Activity 3.1.4).
 - ✓ Adapt activities to children's ages and abilities, ensuring they are educational and engaging (e.g., simple tasks in nursery projects, CES SP, Activity 4.1.1).
- 6. Report Concerns Promptly:**
- ✓ Immediately report any observed or suspected safeguarding issues (e.g., abuse, unsafe conditions during rangeland restoration, CES SP, Activity 2.1.4) to the CES Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours (Policy Section 8.1).
 - ✓ Use CES's confidential reporting mechanisms (e.g., hotline, email) as established (CES SP, Output 7).

3. Prohibited Behaviors

The following actions are strictly forbidden and will result in disciplinary action, including termination and legal consequences where applicable:

- 1. Physical Harm or Discipline:**
 - ✓ No physical punishment, rough handling, or actions that could injure a child (e.g., striking a child during a CES event).
- 2. Emotional or Verbal Abuse:**
 - ✓ No yelling, shaming, bullying, or using derogatory language toward children.
- 3. Sexual Misconduct:**
 - ✓ No sexual comments, gestures, touching, or exploitation of any kind, including inappropriate relationships with children.
- 4. Neglect or Endangerment:**
 - ✓ No leaving children unsupervised or exposing them to unsafe conditions (e.g., hazardous tools or environments during restoration, CES SP, Activity 2.1.1).
- 5. Exploitation:**
 - ✓ No using children for personal gain, labor beyond their capacity, or offering gifts/favors to influence behavior (e.g., in enterprise projects, CES SP, Objective 4.1).
- 6. Inappropriate Contact:**
 - ✓ No private communication with children outside CES activities (e.g., personal calls, social media) unless authorized and supervised.
- 7. Discrimination:**
 - ✓ No excluding or treating children unfairly based on gender, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, contrary to CES's inclusiveness value (CES SP, Section 1.2).

4. Responsibilities

- ✓ **Staff and Volunteers:** Adhere to this code in all interactions, participate in mandatory safeguarding training (CES SP, Activity 1.1.2), and model positive behavior for communities and partners.
- ✓ **Partners and Stakeholders:** Align their conduct with this code during CES collaborations (e.g., CSR tree growing, CES SP, Activity 2.1.3), as required by MOUs (CES SP, Section 2.1.4), and report concerns to CES.
- ✓ **CES Leadership:** Ensure training, resources (e.g., manuals, Activity 1.2.6), and oversight (e.g., annual assessments, CES SP, Activity 1.2.1) support compliance with this code.

5. Breach of Conduct

- ✓ **Reporting:** Any breach must be reported immediately to the CES Safeguarding Officer Email: info@ces-stewardship.org. Website: <https://ces-stewardship.org> or hotline 0755 876 816 or through postal address) P O Box 833 00208, Ngong TOWN PEC HOUSE KIBIKO ROAD, Nairobi
- ✓ **Investigation:** CES will investigate breaches confidentially within 7 days, involving a Safeguarding Committee and authorities if necessary.
- ✓ **Consequences:** Violations may result in disciplinary action (e.g., suspension, termination), legal action, and exclusion from CES programs, reflecting CES's zero-tolerance policy.

6. Acknowledgment and Training

- ✓ **Agreement:** All staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders must sign this Code of Conduct upon joining CES or collaborating on its programs, acknowledging their understanding and commitment.
- ✓ **Training:** CES will provide initial and annual safeguarding training (CES SP, Activity 1.1.2) to ensure all individuals understand these expectations and how to apply them (e.g., during field activities, CES SP, Output 19).

7. Examples

- ✓ **Tree Planting (CES SP, Activity 2.1.1):** Staff ensure children use safe tools under supervision, avoiding heavy lifting, and report if a child appears unwell.
- ✓ **Education Forums (CES SP, Activity 1.1.3):** Volunteers encourage children to share ideas in a group setting, never isolating them for private discussions.
- ✓ **Enterprise Training (CES SP, Activity 4.1.1):** Partners obtain parental consent for child participation in apiculture, ensuring no exploitative tasks are assigned.

8. Implementation

- ✓ **Integration:** Embed the code into CES's organizational policies and partner agreements
- ✓ **Resources:** Allocate budget for training and dissemination
- ✓ **Monitoring:** Track compliance via CES's Monitoring Framework (CES SP, Section 5), e.g., number of staff trained or incidents reported.

11.0 Reporting Procedures

11.1 Identifying Concerns

- ✓ If you suspect or witness any form of child abuse or neglect, report it immediately to your supervisor.

11.2 Confidentiality

- ✓ Reports will be handled confidentially, respecting the privacy of those involved while ensuring transparency in investigations.

11.3 Investigation

- ✓ A thorough investigation will be conducted by the Child Protection Officer or an appointed committee. Appropriate action will be taken based on the findings, which may include disciplinary measures or legal intervention.

11.4 Support for Victims

- ✓ CES will provide support to victims of abuse and their families, working closely with relevant authorities and service providers.

11.5 CES Whistleblowing Mechanism

- ✓ The CES Whistleblowing Mechanism provides a safe, confidential, and anonymous channel for staff, volunteers, partners, stakeholders, community members, and children (where appropriate) to report concerns related to child protection, safeguarding violations, or other misconduct (e.g., fraud, corruption, policy breaches) within CES programs. This mechanism ensures prompt identification and resolution of issues, protecting vulnerable individuals—especially children—and maintaining CES's commitment to ethical operations and community trust. The CES Whistleblowing Mechanism Principles include: -
 - Confidentiality: Protect the identity of whistleblowers and sensitive information.
 - Anonymity: Allow reports without requiring personal identification.
 - Accessibility: Ensure the mechanism is easy to use for all, including children and marginalized groups.
 - Non-Retaliation: Guarantee protection against reprisals for those reporting in good faith.
 - Timeliness: Ensure rapid response to safeguard individuals and address issues.

12.0 Monitoring and Review

- ✓ This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with best practices in child protection.
- ✓ Feedback from staff, partners, and beneficiaries will be incorporated into policy updates.
- ✓ Compliance with this policy will be monitored through internal audits and external evaluations.

13.0 Legal Compliance

CES complies with all national and international laws and regulations concerning child protection, including but not limited to:

- ✓ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- ✓ UNICEF that works with the government to improve access to services for children and adolescents.
- ✓ International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on child labour and exploitation
- ✓ Children Act, No. 29 of 2022 that establishes Children's Courts to handle civil and criminal cases involving children.
- ✓ National Guidelines for Child Protection Case Management and Referral in Kenya- 2019.
- ✓ The Constitution of Kenya 2010: Article 53 that states that children have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect, and violence.
- ✓ The Penal Code that defines child abuse as a punishable offense.
- ✓ The Sexual Offenses Act No. 3 of 2006 that provides for the prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse.
- ✓ Provisions of The Directorate of Children's Services (DCS) that Safeguard children's rights and welfare.

14.0 Contact Information

For any questions, concerns, or reports related to child protection, please contact:
Child Protection Office
Centre for Environmental Stewardship (CES)
P. O. Box 833 00208, Ngong TOWN PEC HOUSE KIBIKO ROAD, Nairobi
Tel: 0755 876 816
Email: info@ces-stewardship.org.
Website: <https://ces-stewardship.org/>