



# Policy Name: Trainee Safeguarding Policy

Policy Family: Safeguarding Policies

**Issue Department:** Human Resource

**Release Date:** December 7, 2023

**Approved By:** Kelly Koch, Managing Director

**Effective Date:** December 15, 2023

**Scope:** This policy applies to all staff, associates (consultants, contractors, volunteers, etc), trainees and partners of all KOTO organizations including KOTO Co., Ltd. and Know One Teach One JSC.

## 1. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Trainee Safeguarding Policy is to protect the youth and vulnerable persons that are under KOTO's care. This policy establishes and documents the overarching principles that guide KOTO's approach to providing a safe and secure environment for its youth in all aspects of its work.

## 2. Background

The wellbeing of youth and vulnerable people at KOTO is of utmost importance to KOTO. KOTO is committed to seeing young people thriving regardless of their gender, sexuality, ethnic grouping, faith, culture, family income, disability or any other defining feature. KOTO believes that young people should never experience abuse of any kind and acknowledges its responsibility to actively promote the welfare of youth and ensure their safety and security by providing clear communications regarding their rights, establishing code of conducts for both the trainees and staff & partners, providing guidance and resources to prevent and respond to child abuse of any form and being committed & prepared to respond promptly and decisively on any concerns that may arise.

## 3. Related References

- All related laws of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on Child protection including Law No. 102/2016/QH13 National Assembly Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- Youth Law No. 57/2020/QH14
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

## 4. Definitions

**4.1 Child and Young Persons** - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) definition of a child, which is any person under the age of 18, regardless of the nation's laws recognizing adulthood earlier. Young Person is further defined by KOTO as any person under the age of 25.

**4.2 Vulnerable Person** - Vulnerable people are defined as a people who may be unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. It is also defined as persons under the age of 18. KOTO considers prospective trainees as well as eventual trainees to be categorized as Vulnerable Persons.

**4.3 Safeguarding** - The responsibility and actions that an organization takes to protect the welfare and human rights of people that are in their care, particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. It includes measures to prevent harm and in the worst case to take action in the event of any reports of concern of alleged incidents.

**4.4 Abuse** - Abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation or sexual abuse. Both boys and girls, women and men can be the victims of abuse, and abuse can be inflicted on a child or other vulnerable person by men, women and other children. Please see [Definitions of Types of Abuse](#) for a detailed list of different types of abuse with explanations to ensure a clear understanding.

## 5. Safeguarding Measures

### 5.1 Personnel Recruitment, Screening & Orientation

KOTO recognizes that safe recruitment and candidate screening forms a fundamental part of safeguarding and protecting the trainees within its care by ensuring there are procedures and relevant checks in place to screen out candidates unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable persons and to attract candidates committed to the continual development and maintenance of a safe & secure environment for its trainees to flourish. The core components are:

- Ensure interviews include at least two interviewers and that behavioral questions are included regarding contact with children and vulnerable persons;
- Requiring at least two (2) references for each successful applicant before an offer is made;
- Receiving Police Checks for all successful applicants;

Additionally, KOTO's safeguarding policies are provided to incoming staff prior to joining and a detailed orientation of relevant policies is conducted within the first week of employment and is followed up by the requirement of a signed acknowledgement indicating receipt, understanding and commitment to comply with the policy.

Finally, all staff, associates (consultants, contractors, volunteers, etc.) are required to sign and adhere to [KOTO's Code of Conduct for working with Children & Young Persons](#). This is provided to staff during their first week of employment and is covered during the orientation program. It states the behavior that is expected to ensure KOTO's operations are conducted professionally and safely with a special emphasis on the expectations related to the interactions with the trainees to ensure their physical and mental safety & security.

The Human Resource Department documents the list of trainings with participants and keeps records of the signed policy and Code of Conduct signed acknowledgement and ensures all staff are included.

Further details of the recruitment & screening practices can be found in KOTO's Staff Recruitment procedures.

### 5.2 Trainee Recruitment

From the first interaction with potential applicants for KOTO's training program, safeguarding measures must be carefully adhered to from the face-to-face meetings during recruitment as well as the ongoing communications during the applications process. It is also important to protect the prospective applicants from requests for financial payments from interested parties for the process that is designed to be completely free of charge.

#### 5.2.1 Recruitment visits

During recruitment visits which include interactions with potential applicants for the trainee whether it be for general meetings, individual meetings, home survey visits, etc., KOTO staff must ensure at least two adults are present for any discussions with children or young adults. The adult representation may be a combination of KOTO staff, partner staff and/or government representatives such as members of DOLISA, Women's Union, etc. KOTO must ensure that this is the case for recruitment meetings even when KOTO staff are not present.

#### 5.2.2 Safe communications

Throughout the duration of the recruitment process, potential trainees will engage in communications across KOTO Facebook platform and KOTO's Recruitment Hotline Zalo account. These accounts are accessible by the Foundation Manager as well as all staff related to recruitment and will be monitored on a regular basis.

Staff who are engaged in recruitment will follow clear protocols in communications that specifically address risks of online grooming actions. These are documented in the Trainee Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

Additionally, all online interviews arranged for applicants are required to have a minimum of two persons on the interview.

### **5.2.3 Notification of free application process**

In order to ensure that prospective applicants and/or their parents are not susceptible to unauthorized requests for payments to apply for KOTO's program from engaged parties (KOTO staff, partners, government authorities, etc.), KOTO has provided a statement on its recruitment platforms and materials communicating that 'The registration and review procedure for KOTO scholarships<sup>1</sup> is completely free.'

## **5.3 Orientation for KOTO Trainees**

The foundation of any safeguarding policy is to ensure that the beneficiaries of the program know their rights, the expectations regarding their actions and behavior and the relevant policies that are in place to ensure the physical and mental safety & security of themselves and their peers. KOTO has taken appropriate measures to document these and to ensure thorough orientation on each of these during their orientation.

### **5.3.1 Trainee Rights**

1. A living and learning environment where trainees are treated with respect and in which language or behavior towards trainees is void of any inappropriate actions including harassing, abusing, sexually provocation, demeaning and/or culturally inappropriate manner. Any infractions from staff, representatives, partners or fellow trainees are dealt with promptly and consistently.
2. Clear organizational policies prohibiting any of KOTO's staff, representatives, partners and other associates to engage in any sexual activity with Trainees and beneficiaries including community members where KOTO programs are located and within KOTO residences. This also includes any sexual requests for protection, favors or any form of assistance.
3. The provision of an organizational culture that prioritizes safeguarding and acts transparently so that it is safe to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance that they will be handled sensitively and properly.

### **5.3.2 KOTO Trainee Code of Conduct**

The [Trainee Code of Conduct](#) has been developed to ensure that each trainee understands what is expected of them during their participation in KOTO's program. These expectations are intended to maximize their success in the program as well as to ensure their behavior towards the staff and peers are appropriate ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all.

### **5.3.3 Orientation and acknowledgement of Safeguarding policy & related documents**

The trainees are provided with the relevant policies and documents upon their arrival at KOTO. An overall orientation is provided regarding KOTO's program and within the first week, a detailed orientation session on KOTO's Trainee Safeguarding Policy and the reporting procedures is conducted including interactive exercises to support the full comprehension of the definitions of abuse, measures in place and steps to take in the event that they encounter any concerns that should need to be raised. All trainees are required to sign a policy acknowledgement that states that they are aware of, understand and commit to comply with the policy documents. The Trainee Wellbeing Manager keeps copies of the list of trainings with participants as well as the signed acknowledgements and ensures that all trainees are included.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholarships is the term used regarding the acceptance into the KOTO program as it is a free of charge program and scholarship is a familiar term regarding the acceptance for education with no costs.

Additionally, KOTO displays posters and flyers across the training center and training restaurant to communicate the important elements of its Safeguarding policies including procedures for reporting any incidents and/or concerns. Emergency Hotline Numbers are also posted in each area.

## 5.4 Ongoing Education & Training

As part of its commitment of prevention and preparation, KOTO provides ongoing training and resources to support staff, representatives, partners as well as trainees after the initial orientation sessions. These educational sessions are intended to

- raise awareness of the need, and measures in place, to keep KOTO's trainees safe;
- communicate the appropriate actions to take in the event a concern or incident occurs;
- provide further resources to help recognize the signs of possible abuse, build trust, etc; and
- keep KOTO's policies and procedures refreshed for all.

At a minimum, staff and trainees are required to attend refresher trainings at least once a year as well as any time the policy or procedures are updated. Additionally, key points of this policy and related guidelines & procedures will be highlighted in Managing Director communications and/or regular Staff meetings at least once a quarter.

Annual affirmation of this policy will be made each year through mandatory policy acknowledgements for all staff and associates. Records related to the training and policy acknowledgements will be held by the Human Resources department.

## 5.5 Trainee Photos & Stories

While it is important for KOTO to promote its mission and programs, it is important to ensure that measures are put in place to ensure the appropriate use of the Trainee's photos and stories.

First and foremost, KOTO must obtain the consent from each trainee upon their acceptance into the program for the use of their image and stories through the signing of the Media Release Consent Form. For trainees under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must sign off as well. In addition to the initial consent, trainees should be informed of the planned use of any photos, videos or stories/profiles and their right to refuse to be included should be respected.

Further, it is important to ensure that KOTO's value of respect for everyone's dignity & self-worth is prominent in the way in which the trainees are represented. The photos and videos must present our trainees in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable, submissive or sexually suggestive manner. Trainee profiles or stories should be presented in a positive manner and specific information related to their background should not be disclosed. Both the images and stories should not misrepresent the individual, situation, context or location.

Privacy laws regulate how an organization must take actions to protect the identity and personal information of its stakeholders. Specific regulations are related to individuals under the age of 18. KOTO is actively putting in place such measures and it is important for staff to understand and comply with these requirements.

The marketing and communications team is primarily responsible for sharing information about KOTO's mission and programs with the public. They will follow appropriate marketing and communications standards when sharing KOTO's achievements and events through media and communication channels. Staff and associates are encouraged to onward share these official communications to their networks. When staff and associates would like to share highlights of their engagements with KOTO, extra care must be taken and the Social, Digital Media and Communications Policy and guidelines must be closely followed.

Further details regarding the taking, use and storage/sharing of trainee photos and stories are outlined in the Social, Digital Media and Communications Policy.

## 6. Responding

KOTO will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and without bias or judgment. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.

KOTO staff, volunteers, associates, etc. are required to immediately (within no more than 24 hours) report any suspected, alleged or evidenced incident of exploitation, abuse or non-compliance of the Trainee Safeguarding policy using the [Safeguarding Reporting & Investigation Procedures](#). This Procedure also outlines the requirements for appropriate and timely referrals to statutory agencies in response to concerns regarding possible abuse.

KOTO, in turn, is obligated to notify some of its funders of any suspected, alleged or evidenced incidents as outlined in the Safeguarding Reporting & Investigation Procedures and such notification will be managed by the Managing Director.

If a trainee experiences an incident of abuse or suspects/is made aware of an incident related to a fellow trainee, s/he should immediately report it to one of the following people:

Title	Name	Telephone #	Email
Foundation Manager	Ms. Hoang Thi Hanh	+84 (0) 904 505 393	<a href="mailto:Hanh.hoang@koto.com.au">Hanh.hoang@koto.com.au</a>
Trainee Wellbeing Manager	Ms. Ngo Hong Nhung	+84 (0) 988 555 608	<a href="mailto:Nhung.ngothihong@koto.com.au">Nhung.ngothihong@koto.com.au</a>
House Mother	Ms. Nguyen Thi Dan	+84 (0) 904775456	<a href="mailto:dan.nguyen@koto.com.au">dan.nguyen@koto.com.au</a>
Dorm Supervisor	Ms. Nguyen Thi Lan	+84 (0) 355 197 900	<a href="mailto:lannguyen@koto.com.au">lannguyen@koto.com.au</a>
Managing Director	Ms. Kelly Koch	+84 (0) 76 877 8645	<a href="mailto:Kelly.koch@koto.com.au">Kelly.koch@koto.com.au</a>

Alternatively, a written notification can be placed in the Comments, Complaints, Compliments box that is located at the KOTO Training Centre and the KOTO Training Restaurant. These boxes will be checked at least once a week.

In the event that you are approached with an allegation of an incident, it is important to stay calm and take the time to listen to the allegation. Offer reassurance that the person reporting the abuse has done the right thing to report this incident. Do not interrogate the person reporting the abuse, but accept what they have to say and inform the person that you will need to report it. Do not promise secrecy; however, assure them that it will be addressed sensitively. Follow the Safeguarding Reporting & Investigation Procedures to report the allegation.

## 7. Working with Partners

In order to fully implement its program with trainees, KOTO engages with a number of partners who interact with KOTO trainees including external training companies or trainers, hotel & hospitality partners for internships, etc. KOTO requires these partner organizations to confirm that they have appropriate safeguarding policies in place that provide at least a similar level of protection of youth and vulnerable persons and require that any incidents are reported to KOTO promptly. In the event that the partner organization does not have such policies in place, KOTO can introduce the necessary protection mechanisms before undertaking the partnership and ensure that the respective partner commits to introduce said protective measures. Further, the requirements will be incorporated into the partner agreements.

When the interactions with KOTO trainees occur on KOTO premises, the partner representatives register at the security gate, sign the [Visitor Regulations](#) and receive a Visitor Pass.

More information regarding detailed safeguarding requirements for KOTO partners and associates are included in the [KOTO Partner and Onsite Visitor Safeguarding Guidelines](#).

## 8. Disciplinary Action

KOTO has a principle of zero tolerance towards acts of abuse and will exercise its right to disciplinary measures including, in serious cases, dismissal (from employment), withdrawal (from consultant or voluntary assignment), contract termination (from partnerships) and/or expulsion (from trainee program) when investigations conducted per KOTO's Safeguarding Reporting & Investigation Procedures demonstrate that the person or organization poses an unacceptable risk to the safety or well-being of its trainees.

If deemed appropriate, KOTO may place a staff member accused of abuse on paid suspension or transfer them to other duties as a temporary measure while an investigation is conducted. They will be advised not to contact or come into close contact with the victim during the investigation. If this advice is disregarded, a restraining order may be issued against the accused.

KOTO reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations, refuse to engage an individual, or require an individual to be replaced if appropriate criminal record checks are not undertaken, or cannot be undertaken.

## 9. Policy Management

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the KOTO Management Board including the Founder and Managing Director.

KOTO encourages its staff to contribute to the continual improvement of its operation environment. In this regard, it welcomes recommendations for improvements and/or revisions to this policy by staff during the course of operations. These improvements should be shared with the Foundation Director, Human Resource Manager and Managing Director. These will be reviewed and considered for policy revision. Minor adjustments or additions can be made by the Managing Director. Any substantial changes must be made in consultation and with the approval of the Management Board.

Every three years it is required that the Management Board make a thorough review of the policy and take any identified actions to ensure that the policy continues to meet the needs of the evolving organization.

Additionally, KOTO Managing Director will monitor the awareness, understanding and implementation of this policy. A confidential survey will be conducted to ensure that KOTO staff, associates and partners are aware and understand the policy within 6 months of the policy or subsequent substantial revision is issued. KOTO's ongoing surveys (focused individual/group discussions or questionnaires) will include questions regarding its safeguarding policies and procedures. Spot checks of the required actions for the implementation of this policy will be conducted by the Managing Director or his/her delegate (staff or consultant) at a minimum of twice a year. This includes, but is not limited to, the Recruitment procedures, the policy & code of conduct acknowledgements as well as the orientation and training refresher courses. The agreement between KOTO International and KOTO stipulates that the representatives from the Board of Directors will also conduct spot checks on KOTO's key policies including the Safeguarding policies and procedures during their annual review visits.

## 10. Change History

Date	Modification	Approved by
December 7, 2023	Replace the Child Protection Policy and incorporate relevant points of the PSEAH policy related to trainees.	Management Board

## 11. Related Documents

Definitions of Types of Abuse  
Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Young Persons  
KOTO Employee Recruitment Procedures  
Trainee Code of Conduct  
Media Release Consent Form  
Social, Digital Media and Communications Policy  
Safeguarding Reporting & Investigation Procedures  
Visitor Regulations  
KOTO Partner and Onsite Visitor Safeguarding Guidelines.