

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct

All *Girls Not Brides* members and staff play an important role in ensuring that the Partnership fulfils its mission to empower women and girls. To achieve this, members must uphold the highest standards of mutual respect and ethical behaviour. The principles in this Code of Conduct enable the Partnership to safeguard its excellent reputation and operate as effectively and efficiently as possible. As a Partnership, we believe in promoting the rights of women and girls, and it is essential that our members and staff adopt a zero-tolerance approach to all unacceptable behaviours that cause avoidable harm during the course of their work, including harassment, bullying and victimisation.

Harassment, bullying, exploitation, victimisation, abuse or unlawful conduct (as described below, in addition to any relevant local laws where requirements are higher) that causes harm to others is prohibited within the *Girls Not Brides* membership.

With this in mind, *Girls Not Brides* requires its members and their staff and representatives to treat all people with **dignity and respect**, in accordance with any and all applicable laws (where requirements are of a higher standard), **regardless of age, disability, sex, ethnicity or other areas of social difference**.

Girls Not Brides members must commit to promote the welfare of their staff, anybody it works with, the local community and anybody that comes into contact with the member organisation, including staff of other member organisations or *Girls Not Brides* staff.

Girls Not Brides requires its members to secure, as far as is feasible, a safe environment for staff and anybody with whom they work. Members must take all reasonable steps to prevent conduct which is contrary to these expectations. If such conduct arises, members must ensure it is appropriately dealt with.

Members are expected to take all reasonable steps to **create an organisational culture that prioritises integrity, dignity, respect, promotion of wellbeing and prevention from harm**, which empowers people to report any incidents and concerns in the knowledge they will be dealt with appropriately.

Member organisations and their staff and representatives must not do anything that would compromise the integrity of *Girls Not Brides* or which may pose a threat to trust in it or its reputation.

If an incident occurs that may have that effect, member organisations must commit to notify the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat without delay. This could be grounds for termination of membership. (Refer to Membership Termination Guidelines for more information.)

Unacceptable behaviour (including harassment, bullying and victimisation) may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms including written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour are:

- aggressive or abusive behaviour such as shouting or personal insults
- spreading malicious gossip or insulting someone
- stalking
- isolation, deliberate exclusion/ non co-operation
- withholding information from other *Girls Not Brides* members that was provided by the secretariat
- misuse of power or position within the Global Partnership
- behaviour which can be seen as directly contravening *Girls Not Brides* Membership Principles

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past. It may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. It may include, for example

- unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;

- sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- offensive speech, e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, for example:

- physical or psychological threats;
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance.

Victimisation is unfavourable treatment of a person because he or she has asserted their rights to fair treatment in line with this policy.

Victimisation may occur when:

- a member has given evidence to the secretariat of harassment or bullying.
- a member makes an allegation (whether expressly or otherwise) of harassment or bullying.
- it is expected that the victimised member intends to carry out any of these actions listed above.

Exploitation involves taking advantage of an imbalance of power (however created) between individuals for the benefit of the individual in the stronger position.

Abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, discriminatory, financial/material, organisation, domestic, through neglect or modern slavery.

Process for lodging a complaint

Girls Not Brides urges members to report incidents of harassment, bullying and victimisation, exploitation and abuse as outlined in this code of conduct. If a member of *Girls Not Brides* wishes to lodge a complaint against another *Girls Not Brides* member, they can take the following steps:

- If possible and the situation is safe and allows, unacceptable behaviour can in the first instance be dealt with by the individual who perceives that they are the recipient of unacceptable behaviour. The individual can raise and discuss the incident with the person subjecting them to the behaviour – though they are not obligated to do so.
- If this approach is unsuccessful, or if the recipient of unacceptable behaviour is unable to resolve the situation themselves, a report should be made to a secretariat staff member of the Partnership team.
- The secretariat staff member from the Partnership team should meet with the individual who has been subject to unacceptable behaviour (including harassment, bullying and victimisation) to discuss the situation with them. This should include establishing the circumstances and timeline, the impact that it has had on the individual, and any steps that have been taken to address the situation.
- The secretariat staff member will then seek to agree on a course of action with the individual. This may – but does not have to – involve a meeting between the individual(s) and the person(s) who has allegedly behaved unacceptably (to be facilitated by the secretariat). The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the aggrieved party feels that reasonable steps have been taken to address the situation and to prevent similar incidents from occurring in future.

Confidentiality

Members of staff who have been involved in any actions taken under this Policy shall seek to ensure that all information remains confidential where practicable. Any investigations shall be carried out with discretion and all parties must be made aware that all information should be treated as confidential.

Conduct constituting a violation of this code of conduct may result in termination of an organisation's membership of *Girls Not Brides*. Please refer to the Member Termination Policy for more information.