

***Girls Not Brides* Membership Termination Policy**

Updated: December 2020

Approved by the Board of Trustees: December 2020

Review Date: December 2022

1. Policy statement

Girls Not Brides prides itself on being an accessible network to eligible civil society organisations that wish to contribute to the common vision and mission of ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their potential. Organisations wishing to join the Partnership must meet a simple set of criteria in order to be eligible for membership which includes adhering to the Safeguarding Standards for *Girls Not Brides* members and the *Girls Not Brides* Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Code, as well as endorsing the *Girls Not Brides* Mission Statement and Membership Principles.

Unfortunately, at times there may be a need to terminate an organisation's membership of *Girls Not Brides*. An organisation can cease to be a member of *Girls Not Brides* either voluntarily or through a decision taken by the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat.

Girls Not Brides is committed to operating openly and transparently in all member interactions and processes.

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide both *Girls Not Brides* secretariat staff and member organisations with guidance on the termination process.
- To detail the grounds for termination of membership.
- To detail the process for the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat to terminate an organisation's membership of *Girls Not Brides*.
- To detail the process for member organisations who wish to rescind their membership of the global partnership.

2. Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all member organisations of *Girls Not Brides*.

3. Grounds for termination by the secretariat

Grounds for the secretariat to terminate an organisation's membership of *Girls Not Brides* include, but are not limited to, substantive facts or reasonable evidence of the following conduct of the member organisation and/or its staff:



- Actions or comments which obstruct the work of the Partnership, or that may pose a threat to the trust in or reputation and integrity of *Girls Not Brides*;
- Actions that are harmful or abusive;
- Breach of *Girls Not Brides*' Membership Principles;
- Breach of the safeguarding principles and standards set out in *Girls Not Brides*' Safeguarding Standards for Members;
- Breach of a contractual agreement that the member has entered into with *Girls Not Brides*;
- Breach of *Girls Not Brides*' or a partner's or member's confidential information;
- Physical violence, actual or threatened abusive behaviour;
- Fraudulent and/or illegal activities;
- Failure to appropriately inform the secretariat about situations involving the member which may adversely impact the reputation of *Girls Not Brides*;
- Harassment, bullying and other discriminatory behaviour;
- Inactivity for a period of six months or more or failure to respond to written communications sent by the secretariat;
- Dissolution of the member organisation;
- Written resignation from the member organisation.

4. Suspension

The secretariat may decide to suspend the member organisation's membership pending investigation of any substantive facts or reasonable evidence of the conduct detailed in Clause 3.

5. Termination initiated by the secretariat

If the secretariat has cause to believe there may be grounds for termination of a member organisation, the following steps will be taken:

1) The CEO or a director will write to the head of the member organisation or the organisation's membership recorded point of contact. The letter will detail the concerns and request a full written response within three weeks. This may include requests for specific information. The letter will explain if the membership is being suspended during this period.

2) The member organisation will have three weeks to submit the written response and provide any relevant information.

- If the member organisation does not provide a reasonable written response within three weeks, the membership of *Girls Not Brides* will be automatically terminated. *Girls Not Brides* will write to the organisation to inform them of the date of termination.

3) The secretariat will commit reasonable time and resource to assess information provided and seek further information or clarification as necessary, extending any period of suspension as necessary while the process is ongoing. The Board of Trustees will be updated as appropriate.



4) Based on the available information and at its discretion, the secretariat will use its reasonable judgement to make a final decision, which will be approved by the CEO. For membership to continue, the secretariat must be satisfied that the areas of concern have been negated or fully resolved and it is in the interests of the Partnership for membership to continue.

- The secretariat will inform the member organisation of its decision by email, noting the grounds for its decision and either the date of the conclusion of the investigation or the date of the termination of membership.

5) Causes for immediate termination without appeal:

- In the case where there are substantive facts or reasonable evidence for gross misconduct¹ or a breach of the Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct which might be prejudicial to the interests of *Girls Not Brides*, the secretariat reserves the right to terminate a member organisation's membership immediately and unilaterally, without a notice period. In these cases, the secretariat will inform the member organisation of its decision by email, noting the grounds for its decision and the date of termination of membership. This decision will be final and there will be no opportunity to appeal.

6. Termination initiated by the member organisation

1) The member organisation will email a letter to the secretariat at info@girlsnotbrides.org, stating their wish to withdraw their membership. The member may also wish to detail the reasons for its decision. The letter should be signed by the head of the organisation, or a staff member with the relevant authority to act in that capacity.

2) The secretariat will acknowledge receipt of the letter within three weeks and inform the concerned member organisation by email that its membership to *Girls Not Brides* has ended and the date of the termination of membership. The secretariat may seek further information about the organisation's decision.

7. Following termination of membership

- Upon termination, the organisation must immediately abstain from referring to its affiliation to *Girls Not Brides* and using the name and logo of *Girls Not Brides*.
- The organisation's member status will be amended on the secretariat's internal database and its information will be removed from the *Girls Not Brides* website within two weeks.
- The Board of Trustees of *Girls Not Brides* will be informed of the termination at the following Board meeting.
- If, at a later stage, the organisation wishes re-join *Girls Not Brides* as a member, it should submit a new membership application at least 12 months after the termination has been confirmed.

8. Confidentiality

¹ Examples of gross misconduct can include, but are not limited to, theft, physical violence, gross negligence, illicit activities or any actions that go against the [Girls Not Brides Safeguarding Standards for Girls Not Brides members](#) or the [Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Code of Conduct](#).



The secretariat will maintain appropriate confidentiality of all relevant individuals and organisations throughout the termination process, sharing information only as deemed necessary by the secretariat.

If there is substantive facts or reasonable evidence to believe that the member organisation has engaged in any fraudulent or illegal activities or has been involved in a safeguarding breach, the *Girls Not Brides* secretariat will share this information as it deems appropriate and/or as required by law.