

Code of Conduct & Safeguarding Policy Agreement



Last Updated: 8 June 2026



Registered Charity



Code of Conduct & Safeguarding Policy Agreement

I, _____ (Volunteer, Staff Member, Contractor, Member, Sponsor & Visitor), have read, understand and agree to the Vanni Hope code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy Agreement. I commit to the required standards of behaviour and practice as outlined in the Code of Conduct & Safeguarding.

Personal & professional behaviour

- Volunteers must perform all tasks in a conscientious, competent, and honest manner, consistent with the values of the organisation.
- Volunteers must treat all participants with respect and courtesy, having regard for their dignity and rights.
- Volunteers must act fairly and equitably, respecting diversity in the environment which they work in.
- Volunteers must prevent and respond to unlawful discrimination against other volunteers, beneficiaries, and stakeholders.
- Volunteers must not engage in bullying, violence, harassment, or any other forms of victimisation.
- Volunteers must dress and act in public in a professional manner that does not reflect adversely on the organisation or other members.
- Volunteer's use of social media must not compromise the organisation's reputation and must not include derogatory, shaming, or other personal attacks towards or about other volunteers, the governing body, members, clients, or stakeholders.

Accountability

- Volunteers must use equipment, facilities, and funds for the primary purpose of undertaking organisational duties.
- Volunteers must maintain confidentiality of all organisation and personal information obtained during informal and formal engagement with the organisation, and utilise such information for the purposes of carrying out duties, and not for financial or other benefit, or to take advantage of another person or organisation.
- Volunteers must maintain organisation and personal records in accordance with legislative and organisational policy requirements.
- Volunteers must ensure all decisions made in the course of their duties are transparent and align with organisational policy and procedures.
- Volunteers must understand and comply with organisation policies and procedures.
- Volunteers are responsible for seeking clarification where needed regarding any part of their task, including details of this Code of Conduct.

- Volunteers take responsibility for reporting conduct by other volunteers, governing body members or visitors which contravenes any law, organisational policy and procedures, or this Code of Conduct.

Conflicts of Interest

- Volunteers declare and manage any potential, actual or apparent conflicts of interests.
- Volunteers do not accept gifts, benefits, or favours that may influence or be reasonably seen to influence decision making.
- Volunteers use best endeavours to prevent nepotism and patronage.
- Volunteers manage conflicts of interest in accordance with organisational conflict of interest policies and procedures.

Safe Environment

- Volunteers are to perform their tasks in a safe and competent manner in accordance with organisational workplace health and safety policies and procedures, and relevant workplace health and safety legislation.
- Volunteers must take care to not put themselves or others at risk or reduce their ability to carry out their duties through unsafe practices, inappropriate behaviours or the misuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Volunteers act in preventing, identifying, and responding to workplace health and safety risks.

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

This policy constitutes Vanni Hope's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy, and applies to all personnel, including volunteers, paid staff, contractors, governing body members, sponsors, and visitors.

Vanni Hope is committed to maintaining learning and working in an environment free of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. This policy is intended to make all members and volunteers aware of the various reporting and confidential disclosure options available so that they can make informed choices about where to turn should they become a victim of, or become aware of sex discrimination. Reports may be made by volunteers or beneficiaries for events occurring while on duty as well as off duty.

Child Safeguarding

Vanni Hope is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children with whom it works. All personnel must treat children with dignity and respect, and must not engage in behaviour that could cause physical, emotional, or sexual harm to a child. Required safe behaviours include: (a) do not be alone with a child without another adult present; (b) do not use physical punishment; (c) do not take photographs or footage of children without written consent from a parent or guardian and approval from the Safeguarding Officer; (d) immediately report any concerns about a child's safety to the Safeguarding Officer.

Mandatory Reporting: All personnel have an obligation to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect to the Safeguarding Officer immediately. Depending on jurisdiction, personnel may also have a legal duty to report directly to the relevant authority - in Australia, to the relevant state/territory child protection service; in Sri Lanka, to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA).

Working With Children: All Australian-based personnel undertaking child-facing activities must hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent clearance for their state or territory before commencing those activities. Sri Lanka-based personnel must undergo equivalent vetting in accordance with local law and Vanni Hope's requirements.

Responsibility to Report

All Volunteers (except Confidential Resources), including field staff, directors and administrators, have a responsibility to report to the Safeguarding Officer any potential sexual misconduct or violations of this policy of which they become aware so that Vanni Hope can respond appropriately.

Making a Report / Filing a Complaint

Vanni Hope encourages anyone who experiences or witnesses sexual misconduct to report the misconduct, seek assistance and support services, and to pursue action for their own protection and that of the entire community. However, the decision whether or not to report sexual misconduct is a difficult and intensely personal one. It may take some time to process an incident and decide how best to proceed. Vanni Hope wishes to provide support and assistance during this time.

Reporting Options

A complainant or witness to sexual misconduct may make a report by talking to a trusted Vanni Hope office bearer such as a Director or to the local project coordinator. A complainant can also file a criminal complaint directly with local police or a law enforcement agent. If they might not be ready to report, before or during this decision-making process, they are encouraged to seek assistance from a Confidential Resource before deciding how to proceed.

Confidential Resource

Where available, Vanni Hope will connect individuals with an appropriate external counselling service. In the interim, individuals in Australia may contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. These conversations will remain confidential unless there is a risk to the safety of the individual or others. Unless the individual takes additional action, such as reporting to a member of the safeguarding team, the disclosure will not result in any action by Vanni Hope.

Making a Report

Instances of sexual harassment and/or misconduct may be reported to a member of the project coordinating team, a supervisor, a member of Vanni Hope or a local police or law enforcement agent. If an alleged victim or witness wants to tell a member about an incident involving sexual misconduct and wishes their conversation to remain confidential, the individual should understand that the Safeguarding Officer will consider the request but cannot guarantee confidentiality in all cases.

In most cases, it is likely a report of sexual misconduct will be investigated by the local police or law enforcement, regardless of whether the reporting individual wishes to pursue a formal complaint. A complaint is a request that the incident is investigated. This can follow an informal or a formal process. Individuals may file a complaint with any member of the officers team. The immediate goal is to stop the offensive conduct and ensure everyone's safety. Private information will be shared with as few people as possible on a need-to-know basis.

The complainant should be prepared to give a detailed description of the sexual misconduct, the date and time of occurrence, the names of the persons involved, the names of any witnesses, and any further action taken. The complaint will be reviewed by a member of the officers team, first seeking an informal resolution if appropriate.

Making a Criminal Complaint

In addition to violating Vanni Hope policy, sexual misconduct might also constitute criminal activity. Every alleged victim of a sexual assault maintains the right to file criminal charges with the appropriate local law enforcement agency simultaneously and in addition to making a report and/or filing a complaint with Vanni Hope. The alleged victim can decline to notify such agency.

Local Police can assist in contacting the proper authorities if the alleged victim chooses to. If a criminal complaint is filed, the complainant will be asked to assist the police with the investigation and provide them with details of what happened and with the collection of all relevant evidence. In some cases, a protective order may be obtained. The chances of a successful criminal investigation are greatly enhanced if evidence is collected and maintained immediately by law enforcement officers.

The Vanni Hope Safeguarding Officer investigation and the criminal law system are independent of one another and, regardless of whether criminal charges are brought or not, Vanni Hope will move forward with its internal investigation. The Vanni Hope Safeguarding Team will meet its responsibilities regarding any orders of protection, no contact orders, or restraining orders. For more information about pursuing criminal charges, complainants should contact the local police.

Timeframe for Reporting

Vanni Hope strongly encourages prompt reporting of any violation of this policy in order to provide immediate protection and support for the victim. Vanni Hope's ability to conduct a thorough investigation, however, may be limited with the passage of time or unavailability of the accused or witnesses.

Complaint Response Timeframes: Vanni Hope will acknowledge receipt of all complaints within five (5) business days. A substantive response or outcome will be provided within thirty (30) business days. Where an investigation requires more time, the complainant will be notified of the expected revised timeframe.

Bystander Intervention

Maintaining a healthy, safe, and respectful environment is the responsibility of all members of Vanni Hope. Vanni Hope strongly encourages all volunteers and beneficiaries to take action to prevent or stop acts of sexual misconduct. Such actions might include direct intervention, calling local police or seeking assistance from other authorities. A volunteer / member who calls for medical help will not be sanctioned for any accompanying conduct code violations.

Amnesty for Reporting Sexual Misconduct

Vanni Hope does not condone excessive drinking or illegal use of controlled substances. However, in order to encourage reporting of conduct that is prohibited under this policy, a Vanni Hope volunteer involved in filing a complaint or participating in the investigation of an allegation of sexual misconduct prohibited by this policy, will not be subject to disciplinary action under Vanni Hope's Code of Conduct & Safeguarding Policy for their own personal consumption of alcohol or

drugs at or near the time of the incident, provided that any such violations do not place the health or safety of any other person at risk.

The Importance of Preserving Evidence

Regardless of whether an incident of sexual misconduct is reported to the police or Vanni Hope, Vanni Hope strongly encourages individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct to preserve evidence to the greatest extent possible, as this will best maintain all legal options for them in the future.

Partner Obligations

Vanni Hope will ensure that all implementation partners and funded organisations operating in Sri Lanka are bound by equivalent safeguarding obligations through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or partnership agreements. Partners must report any safeguarding incidents or concerns to the Vanni Hope Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

Safeguarding Officer

Name	Date Appointed
Malathi Waran	8 June 2026

Review

This Policy will be reviewed once every two years to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

Date	Version	Review Description	Reviewed by	Approved by
Feb 2025	1	New template created	Virosh Poologasundaram	Board of Directors
June 2026	2	Complete reformat and general update of policy	Abinaja Yogarajah	Board of Directors

I, _____ (Volunteer, Staff Member, Contractor, Member, Sponsor & Visitor), have read, understand and agree to this organisation's Code of Conduct & Safeguarding policy. I commit to the required standards of behaviour and practice as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Member / Volunteer signature

Date

