

POLICY DOCUMENT

POLICY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CHILD LABOR EXPLOITATION

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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and comprehensive framework for the prevention of human trafficking and the exploitation of child labor within Mingachevir State University and all its areas of operation. The policy aims to ensure that all university activities are conducted in full compliance with national legislation and international human rights standards, while promoting a culture of zero tolerance toward any form of exploitation, abuse, or unethical practice.

This policy seeks to raise awareness among staff, students, contractors, and partners regarding the risks, consequences, and ethical implications of human trafficking and child labor. It also aims to define clear responsibilities and expected standards of conduct, ensuring that all stakeholders actively contribute to preventing such violations and promoting a safe, fair, and inclusive environment.

Furthermore, the policy is designed to support the early identification of potential risks, strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and ensure that any suspected or confirmed cases are addressed promptly, transparently, and in accordance with established procedures. Through these measures, Mingachevir State University reinforces its commitment to human rights, social responsibility, and sustainable institutional development.

MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY

POLICY AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CHILD LABOR EXPLOITATION

Human Dignity, Ethics, Responsibility.

“Protecting the most vulnerable is our highest duty.”

CORE PRINCIPLES

- PROTECTION**
Ensuring the **safety, protection, and support** for victims of human trafficking and child labor.
- PREVENTION**
Raising awareness and **educating** on the dangers of human trafficking and child labor.
- REPORTING AND RESPONSE**
Establishing clear mechanisms to report suspicions and respond promptly to alerts.
- COMPLIANCE**
Adhering strictly to national and **international laws** prohibiting human trafficking and child labor.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To prevent human trafficking and child labor within our **community** and operations.
- To **support** victims with resources, assistance, and **protection**.
- To ensure strict compliance with national and international laws and regulations.

Higher education institutions play a critical role not only in knowledge generation but also in promoting ethical values, human rights, and social responsibility. In this context, Mingachevir State University is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity and ensuring that its operations and partnerships are free from any form of human trafficking and child labor exploitation. The university recognizes that such practices violate fundamental human rights and are incompatible with the principles of fairness, dignity, and equality. This policy has been developed to provide a structured and preventive approach to addressing risks related to human trafficking and child labor within the university environment and its broader network of activities. It reflects the university's commitment to compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as alignment with international conventions and best practices in human rights protection.

In the modern global environment, risks related to exploitation may arise in various areas, including procurement processes, outsourcing, partnerships, and project implementation. Therefore, it is essential to establish clear standards, responsibilities, and control mechanisms across all structural units and stakeholder groups. This policy aims to ensure that all university-related activities are conducted ethically, transparently, and responsibly.

Through this document, Mingachevir State University seeks to strengthen its institutional framework, raise awareness among its community, and contribute to the prevention of human trafficking and child labor.



Human Trafficking: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons through coercion, deception, or abuse of power for the purpose of exploitation, including forced labor, servitude, or other forms of abuse.



Child Labor Exploitation: Any work performed by individuals under the legal working age that is harmful to their physical, mental, or moral development, or that interferes with their education and well-being.



Forced Labor: Work or service that is extracted from an individual under the threat of punishment or coercion, where the person has not voluntarily agreed to perform such work.



Ethical Conduct and Compliance: Acting in accordance with legal requirements, institutional policies, and ethical standards to prevent exploitation and ensure respect for human rights in all activities.



Reporting and Whistleblowing: The process of safely and confidentially reporting suspected or actual cases of human trafficking, child labor, or related violations through established institutional mechanisms.

Scope of Application

Mingachevir State University recognizes that preventing human trafficking and child labor exploitation requires coordinated efforts with a wide range of stakeholders. In this context, the university cooperates closely with relevant government institutions to ensure compliance with national legislation, facilitate information exchange, and strengthen the implementation of human rights standards. At the same time, collaboration with international organizations enables the adoption of global best practices, participation in awareness initiatives, and alignment with internationally recognized frameworks.

The university also engages with the private sector, contractors, and suppliers, ensuring that all partnerships are based on strict ethical standards and exclude any form of exploitation within operational and supply chain activities. Cooperation with academic and research institutions further supports knowledge sharing, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives in the field of human rights and ethical governance. Additionally, engagement with civil society organizations contributes to awareness-raising, training, and community outreach efforts.

Within the university, students, staff, and internal groups play an active role in promoting ethical values and supporting prevention mechanisms. Their participation in awareness campaigns, reporting systems, and institutional initiatives strengthens a culture of responsibility, transparency, and respect for human rights, ensuring the effective implementation of this policy across all areas of activity.

Core Principles

Respect for Human Rights

All university activities are conducted with full respect for human dignity, fundamental rights, and freedoms, ensuring zero tolerance for human trafficking and child labor exploitation.

Zero Tolerance

The university adopts a strict and uncompromising approach toward any form of exploitation, abuse, or unethical practice, ensuring immediate action against violations.

Legal Compliance

All operations and partnerships are carried out in accordance with national legislation and relevant international conventions related to human rights and labor standards.

Transparency and Accountability

Processes are implemented in an open and traceable manner, with clear responsibilities and accountability mechanisms to ensure ethical conduct and oversight.

Prevention and Risk Management

Proactive measures are taken to identify, assess, and mitigate risks related to human trafficking and child labor across all areas of activity.

Awareness and Responsibility

The university promotes continuous awareness, training, and shared responsibility among staff, students, and partners to prevent exploitation and uphold ethical standards.

Strategic Objectives

Prevention of Human Trafficking and Child Labor Risks



To establish a systematic approach for identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks related to human trafficking and child labor across all university activities and partnerships.

Compliance with Human Rights and Legal Standards



To ensure full alignment with national legislation and international human rights conventions, embedding ethical and legal compliance into all institutional processes.

Awareness and Capacity Building



To strengthen awareness, knowledge, and competencies of staff, students, and stakeholders through continuous training and education on human trafficking and child labor risks.

Ethical and Responsible Partnerships



To ensure that all collaborations, including contractors and supply chains, are based on ethical principles and strictly exclude any form of exploitation.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Protection Mechanisms



To establish effective monitoring, secure reporting (whistleblowing), and protection systems that enable early detection, safe disclosure, and continuous improvement of institutional practices.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Objective	Indicator (KPI)	Baseline (2024)	Target (2027)	Timeline	Responsible Unit
Strengthening awareness on human trafficking and child labor	Share of staff trained (%)	50%	90%	2024–2027	Human Resources Department
Increasing student awareness	Share of students informed (%)	45%	85%	2024–2027	Student Affairs Department
Improving response effectiveness	Share of investigated and resolved cases (%)	70%	95%	2024–2027	Ethics and Disciplinary Committee
Ensuring ethical partnerships	Share of partners screened for compliance (%)	45%	80%	2024–2027	Internal Audit Department
Strengthening risk management	Share of units assessed for risks (%)	60%	90%	2024–2027	Internal Audit Department
Strengthening reporting mechanisms	Share of active and accessible reporting channels (%)	55%	90%	2024–2027	Digital Transformation Department

Implementation Mechanism

The implementation of the Policy Against Human Trafficking and Child Labor Exploitation at Mingachevir State University is carried out through a coordinated and structured institutional framework. Clear roles and responsibilities are assigned to relevant structural units to ensure that the policy is effectively integrated into all areas of university operations and that it produces measurable outcomes.

The Internal Audit Department plays a central role in assessing risks, conducting monitoring activities, and ensuring compliance with the policy. The Human Resources Department supports implementation by organizing training programs, raising awareness, and managing ethical compliance processes among staff. The Ethics and Disciplinary Committee is responsible for reviewing reported cases, conducting investigations, and recommending appropriate actions where violations are identified.

A key component of the implementation mechanism is awareness and capacity building. Regular training sessions, seminars, and informational campaigns are conducted for staff, students, and stakeholders to ensure a clear understanding of risks related to human trafficking and child labor, as well as the procedures for prevention and reporting. These activities contribute to building a strong institutional culture based on human rights and ethical responsibility.

Accessible and secure reporting mechanisms are established to allow individuals to report suspected or actual violations. Anonymous and confidential channels are provided to ensure the protection of whistleblowers. All reported cases are formally registered, reviewed in a timely manner, and addressed in accordance with established procedures.

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Governance and Responsibilities

Structure / Role	Responsibilities
Rector	Ensures approval and overall oversight of the policy; leads the implementation of the zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking and child labor; coordinates between structural units and ensures high-level review of reports.
Academic Council	Approves strategic directions of the policy; regularly reviews implementation results; participates in decision-making related to human rights risks and ethical compliance.
Internal Audit Department	Conducts risk assessments related to human trafficking and child labor; organizes audits and inspections; reviews reported cases; prepares recommendations and reports for leadership.
Human Resources Department	Ensures ethical standards in recruitment and employment practices; promotes awareness and training; monitors compliance with labor and human rights requirements.
Ethics and Disciplinary Committee	Investigates reported cases of human trafficking, child labor, and ethical violations; makes decisions; recommends disciplinary actions; ensures adherence to ethical standards.
Finance and Supply Department	Ensures that financial operations and procurement processes comply with ethical and legal standards; monitors suppliers and partners to prevent any form of exploitation; supports transparency and accountability.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of the Policy Against Human Trafficking and Child Labor Exploitation at Mingachevir State University is supported by a continuous and systematic monitoring and evaluation framework. This process is designed not as a formal review, but as an evidence-based mechanism to assess real performance, identify risks, and improve institutional decision-making.

Monitoring is conducted based on predefined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including awareness levels among staff and students, the number and resolution rate of reported cases, the level of compliance with human rights standards, and the extent of risk assessments across structural units. These indicators enable the university to track progress, detect emerging risks, and evaluate the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Data collection is carried out through multiple sources, including internal audits, training records, reporting systems, and compliance monitoring processes. Relevant structural units contribute to this process by providing periodic reports, which are consolidated and analyzed on a quarterly and annual basis. The analysis focuses not only on numerical trends but also on identifying root causes, gaps, and areas for improvement.

The evaluation results are regularly presented to university leadership and relevant stakeholders. Based on these findings, corrective actions, policy updates, and capacity-building measures are implemented to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the policy. Additionally, selected aggregated results may be shared with the university community to enhance transparency and trust, while ensuring confidentiality and data protection.

Furthermore, benchmarking against national and international best practices is conducted to ensure alignment with evolving standards. Feedback from stakeholders, including staff, students, and partners, is incorporated into the evaluation process to improve policy relevance and effectiveness. Digital tools and data management systems are utilized to enhance accuracy, traceability, and efficiency in monitoring activities. These combined efforts ensure that the policy remains dynamic, responsive, and continuously improving within the university's governance framework.

Stakeholder Engagement

Mingachevir State University recognizes that the effective implementation of the Policy Against Human Trafficking and Child Labor Exploitation depends on the active involvement of both internal and external stakeholders. The university adopts an inclusive and transparent approach, ensuring that all relevant parties contribute to the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the policy.

Internal stakeholders—including academic and administrative staff, students, faculties, and structural units—are actively engaged through training programs, awareness campaigns, surveys, and feedback mechanisms. Their participation helps assess the real situation, identify risks, and strengthen ethical practices within the university. Students, in particular, play an important role in promoting awareness and supporting a culture based on human rights and responsibility.

External stakeholders—such as government institutions, private sector partners, contractors, international organizations, and civil society—are also involved in the process. Collaboration with these groups supports compliance with legal and ethical standards, facilitates the exchange of best practices, and ensures that all partnerships are aligned with principles of integrity and human rights.

Regular communication channels are maintained to gather feedback, share information, and strengthen cooperation. This engagement enhances transparency, builds trust, and ensures that the policy is effectively implemented and continuously improved, contributing to a responsible and sustainable institutional environment.



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Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

This policy directly contributes to **SDG 16** – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions by strengthening institutional integrity, preventing exploitation, and ensuring accountability through effective governance and control mechanisms. The adoption of a zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking and child labor supports the creation of a safe and rights-based institutional environment.

It also advances **SDG 8** – Decent Work and Economic Growth by promoting fair labor practices, eliminating any form of forced or child labor, and ensuring that all employment and partnership activities are conducted in line with ethical and legal standards.

Furthermore, the policy reinforces **SDG 17** – Partnerships for the Goals by embedding transparency and ethical compliance into all collaborations. By working with trusted and responsible partners, the university contributes to building sustainable, value-based partnerships that align with international human rights principles.

Evidence and Reporting

The effectiveness of the Policy Against Human Trafficking and Child Labor Exploitation at Mingachevir State University is supported by a structured system of evidence collection and reporting. All activities related to the implementation of the policy are documented and serve as a verifiable evidence base for monitoring compliance and performance. These include records of training sessions and participation rates, awareness activities, submitted declarations, reported cases, investigation outcomes, and internal audit findings.

Evidence is collected from multiple sources across the university. The Internal Audit Department provides audit and inspection reports, the Human Resources Department tracks training and compliance indicators, and reporting systems capture information on complaints and alerts. In addition, documentation related to partnerships, contracts, and operational processes is maintained to ensure that all activities align with ethical and human rights standards.

Reporting mechanisms are designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making. Relevant structural units prepare periodic reports—typically on a quarterly and annual basis—which are consolidated and presented to university leadership.

At the same time, the university ensures that reporting processes maintain confidentiality and protect sensitive information, particularly in cases involving whistleblowers or vulnerable individuals. Selected aggregated information may be shared with the university community to enhance transparency and trust. Through this comprehensive approach, evidence and reporting mechanisms support continuous improvement and ensure that the policy remains an effective and accountable governance tool.