

M&S Child Labour Procedure

- **Zero tolerance approach**
- **Effective remediation plans**
- **Leadership role at industry level**

Summary

M&S has a zero tolerance approach to child labour in any part of its supply chain. It is essential that children are not put at risk or deprived of an education or childhood, or in any way mentally, physically, socially, or morally harmed, through working in supply chains. Children are vulnerable because they are still developing both physically and emotionally. Every effort should be made to ensure that child labour does not feature in any supply chain, and in the rare instances it does occur, that an effective remediation plan be put in place, and root causes are understood, to prevent the issue from reoccurring.

Policy on Child Labour

Suppliers must not employ workers who are younger than:

- i) the legal minimum age for employment applicable to the supplier/country; or
- ii) the age of completion of compulsory education;

In any event, a supplier must not employ a person under the age of 15 in any circumstances and must implement robust age verification checks at all times to ensure this policy is upheld.

Suppliers must not recruit child labour nor exploit children in any way. If children are found working directly or indirectly for the supplier, the supplier must implement a remediation plan, develop or participate in and contribute to policies and programmes that puts the best interests of the child first, and enables the child to access appropriate education until no longer a child.

Young workers under 18 years of age must not be employed to work at night, or in hazardous conditions which compromise their health, their safety or their moral integrity, and/or which harm their physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

All work of persons under the age of 18 must be subject to an appropriate risk assessment and regular monitoring of health, working conditions, and hours of work.

Procedure

- If underage workers are identified in suppliers currently producing Marks & Spencer products, whether employed directly by the supplier, or by a third party labour provider, the approach will be to first ensure the child has all the protection their local labour law affords them. We would then seek to work with the supplier and appropriate organisations to develop a programme to provide for the child's transition back into appropriate education.
- The welfare of the child must be the priority and our aim should be to take account of the needs of the child and their family. Underage workers **MUST NOT** be dismissed or suffer any hardship as a result of any audit / investigation. The child should be removed from work immediately, and given free and safe accommodation and food until a full remediation plan is developed. Wages should continue to be paid during this time.
- Continuity of orders is a key component of successful implementation and completion of remediation plans, however in certain circumstances further orders may be suspended until the supplier engages in a suitable remediation plan which matches the needs and circumstances of the child. If a supplier cannot demonstrate ownership of a remediation programme and commitment to no further recruitment of child labour, no further orders will be placed. M&S is committed to resuming 'business as usual' as soon as a supplier can demonstrate that the agreed remediation programme has been implemented and that M&S can be satisfied that no further child labour will be employed. (Timescales will be dependent on the extent of the problem.)
- An appropriate remediation plan will be developed in consultation with a local NGO or other appropriate organization, as well as the child and their family or legal guardians. This plan would be based on an educational or training programme, as well as safe accommodation (where not already in place), until the legal working age is reached. A clear plan will be putting in place regarding funding for the remediation, as well as on-going monitoring, until the child reaches working age.
- Other Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) members working in the same supplier may be alerted through the ETI secretariat under the confidentiality agreement and collaborative efforts may be employed.
- If child labour is found in a supplier before we have engaged with the proposed site, while we are not directly responsible for implementing the remediation plan, a best practice guideline including a recommended Child Labour Remediation Plan would be provided.

Scope

The above applies to direct suppliers of M&S. We recognise that child labour may also, in rare circumstances, occur within raw material and component supply chains. In these areas, we work to understand where the risk is greatest, and work with our direct suppliers to ensure they also follow a zero tolerance approach, and in the rare cases it is found, to operate a remediation process as described above.

Agricultural supply chains

We recognise that in some agricultural supply chains, such as family-based smallholder farming, children below the age of 15 may assist family members in farming activities. This should only ever be light, non-hazardous work which does not interfere with schooling and which is not mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous or harmful to children, or deprive them of their childhood, potential, or dignity.

In some instances, child labour may occur in complex commodity supply chains where it is difficult for M&S to establish transparency. In these circumstances we seek to work at the industry level to establish and take part in credible industry schemes. In these situations we seek to be publicly transparent about the initiatives we are involved in, and seek to play a leadership role within these initiatives.

M&S currently works within a number of certification schemes to raise the ethical and sustainability standards of raw material sources. We engage in active dialogue with these certification standards on steps taken to continuously improve avoidance and remediation of child labour. In the rare circumstances where child labour is found in certified supply chains, we work with the certifier on remediation and addressing the root cause of the issue.

Supporting information

This procedure is supported by a detailed workflow and appendices which is [available here](#).

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