

M&S Young Workers and Child Labour Policy

Summary

M&S upholds a zero-tolerance policy toward child labour across all tiers of its supply chain, in line with ILO Conventions 138 and 182. No child may be exposed to work that interferes with compulsory education, deprives them of a normal childhood, or poses any risk of mental, physical, social, or moral harm. Children's heightened vulnerability, due to their ongoing physical and emotional development, requires the strictest protections. All necessary measures must be taken to ensure that child labour is absent from all tiers of the supply chain and if identified, a robust remediation plan must be put in place and the root causes addressed to prevent recurrence.

We have the greatest leverage with our direct suppliers, working with them closely to resolve issues and reduce the likelihood of child labour at our sites. Where we have less leverage, we aim to address systemic issues collaboratively with other brands and stakeholders to affect industry-level change.

We recognise that there is greater risk of child labour in raw material and component supply chains, so we also work at the industry level to establish and take part in credible industry schemes. 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.

Scope

The above applies to direct suppliers (also known as Tier 1) of M&S Fashion, Home & Beauty and Food Tier 1 supply chains that are actively supplying finished goods. In line with our Global Sourcing Principles, we expect our direct suppliers to maintain our standards throughout our tiers, upholding a zero-tolerance approach to child labour. Where instances of child labour are found in our lower tiers, the remediation process outlined below will be operated.

In circumstances where child labour is found in certified supply chains, such as Fairtrade, we work with the certifier on remediation and addressing the root cause of the issue.

Commitment of Supplier Partners

- **As per the [M&S Global Sourcing Principles](#) and in alignment with international standards on child labour, a supplier must not employ a person under the age of 15 in any circumstances.** Appropriate due diligence of own operations and supply chain must be undertaken, and suppliers must have a dedicated policy in place for Child Labour that includes clear steps for effective remediation. Suppliers 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 between 15 and 18 years may undertake formal work-based training or apprenticeship programs.** These programs must be aimed at developing Young Workers' skills and experience and always meet local legal requirements. 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.**

Suppliers are recommended to refer to the [ILO's Supplier Guidance on Preventing, Identifying and Addressing Child Labour](#) for practical checklists, guidance and notification forms to develop a preventative approach to child labour. The Guidance offers support on effective age verification and the protection of young workers, and guidance on how to effectively respond to it if it does occur.

Procedure for Remediation

- Suppliers must notify M&S as soon as possible when they detect potential or actual incidents of child labour by contacting the relevant member of the M&S FH&B Ethical Trade/ Foods Human Rights team.
- If underage workers are identified in suppliers currently producing M&S 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 extent of issue and the plan for remediation.)*
- In line with ILO guidelines, best practice is for a supplier to engage with an expert third party to provide guidance on effective remediation, which M&S will support.

- An appropriate remediation plan will be developed in consultation with a local NGO or other appropriate organisation, if possible, as well as with the child, 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 put in place by the supplier regarding remediation, as well as ongoing monitoring, until the child reaches working age.
- Where we are members of multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) or Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET)'s Serious Incident Escalation Protocol, members working in the same supplier may be alerted through the relevant secretariat under the confidentiality agreement and collaborative efforts may be employed.
- In scenarios where a person under the legal working age has been identified at the site, outside of any designated childcare facilities (if available), but not found to be working, M&S will work closely with the supplier to investigate and ensure that a corrective action plan is implemented, including appropriate training.