

# Human rights

## Human Rights Policy

The Yakult Group operates globally, based on our philosophy of contributing to the health and happiness of people around the world. To make this a reality, it is important to create a society in which human rights are protected and respected all over the world.

We recognize that our actions may have a direct or indirect impact on human rights during the course of conducting business, or through our value chain. In order to ensure that the human rights of all people involved in our business are respected, in fiscal 2021, we established the Yakult Group Human Rights Policy in April after deliberation and approval by the Board of Directors. The Policy clearly states that we shall promote human rights based on the framework of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (referred to below as the “Guiding Principles”), which is the global standard for human rights. Using that framework, we will continue to develop and implement mechanisms for human rights due diligence.

## Human rights promotion structure

Chief responsibility for promoting human rights activities based on the Policy and conducting regular oversight of compliance with the Policy lies with the Yakult Honsha director who holds the position of Divisional General Manager of the Management Support Division. In addition, the content of concrete initiatives is deliberated and discussed by the CSR Promotion Committee, headed by the director who holds the position of Divisional General Manager of the Management Support Division, and other bodies. All important matters concerning human rights are reported to the Board of Directors.

## Human rights due diligence

The Yakult Group will develop and implement mechanisms for human rights due diligence in hopes of building a responsible supply chain where preventive approaches ensure that all human rights are respected. Through its human rights due diligence, the Group will identify, prevent and mitigate any potential negative impacts on society. In fiscal 2021, we established the human rights due diligence review meeting attended by members of relevant departments. We then gathered and shared information relating to human rights due diligence and identified key human rights issues within the Yakult Group.

## Yakult Group Human Rights Policy

The Yakult Group operates its global business under the corporate philosophy of “We contribute to the health and happiness of people around the world through pursuit of excellence in life science in general and our research and experience in microorganisms in particular,” and in order to fully realize this philosophy it is vital that we create a society where human rights are protected and respected throughout the world.

The Yakult Group recognizes that during the course of conducting business, or through our value chain there exists the possibility that the group may have a negative impact on human rights, either directly or indirectly, and in order to ensure that the human rights of all people involved in the business are respected, the group shall hereby establish the Yakult Group Human Rights Policy (hereinafter referred to as the “Policy”), shall promote initiatives to further the respect of human rights, shall undertake continuous improvements, and shall contribute to the realization of a sustainable society.

The Yakult Group acts in accordance with the United Nations’ “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights” for respecting human rights and supports and respects the following international principles in the execution of its business activities:

- The International Bill of Human Rights (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)
- The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work by International Labour Organization (ILO)
- The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- The Children’s Rights and Business Principles (developed jointly by UNICEF, UN Global Compact, and Save the Children)

The Yakult Group operates globally and conducts business activities based on the laws and regulations of the countries and regions it operates in. If the laws of a given country or region differ from international human rights norms, the group follows the higher standards. If the laws of the country or region contradict international norms, the group will pursue an internationally recognized method which respects human rights to the maximum possible extent.

The Yakult Group Human Rights Policy contains provisions on the following.

1. Scope
2. Responsibility for respecting human rights
3. Establishment of promotion structure
4. Human rights due diligence
5. Remedy
6. Information disclosure
7. Dialogue and talks with stakeholders
8. Education and training
9. Human rights issues related to business activities

The Policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. and signed by the President and Representative Director.

Established: April 27, 2021

**Hiroshi Narita**  
President and Representative Director



Please refer to the following URL for the full text of the Yakult Group Human Rights Policy:

**WEB** [https://www.yakult.co.jp/english/csr/social/human\\_rights/](https://www.yakult.co.jp/english/csr/social/human_rights/)

#### 14 key human rights issues for the Yakult Group

	Key human rights issue	Stakeholders
1	Forced labor, human trafficking	Employees (Yakult)
2	Child labor	Employees (Yakult)
3	Discrimination	Employees (Yakult)
4	Inhumane treatment	Employees (Yakult)
5	Freedom of association, collective bargaining rights	Employees (Yakult)
6	Working hours	Employees (Yakult)
7	Wages	Employees (Yakult)
8	Occupational health and safety	Employees (Yakult)
9	Human-rights issues on the supply chain	Employees (supply chain)
10	Health of local residents	Local communities
11	Water access, hygiene	Local communities
12	Ethical, responsible marketing	Consumers
13	Health and safety	Consumers
14	Rights to privacy	Employees, local communities, clinical trial participants, etc.

After considering ways to address the issues that emerged, we then formulated a medium-term roadmap and an action plan for fiscal 2022. From fiscal 2022 forward, we will promote human rights due diligence across the Yakult Group in accordance with the action plan.

#### ■ Human rights due diligence promotion council

In fiscal 2021, we established the human rights due diligence review meeting attended by members of relevant departments. We then gathered and shared information relating to human rights due diligence and identified key human rights issues within the Yakult Group. Looking carefully at how to address the issues that emerged, we then formulated a medium-term roadmap and an action plan for fiscal 2022.

The name of the body was changed in fiscal 2022 to the human rights due diligence promotion council to clarify its role as a cross-organizational structure for promoting human rights due diligence and to continue promoting human rights due diligence across the Yakult Group in accordance with the action plan.

#### Human rights due diligence promotion council

Secretariats of various CSR Promotion Committees\*

Compliance Promotion Team

International Business Department  
(department responsible for overseas offices)

\* At the Yakult Central Institute and for development, plants, distribution and the Head Office

## Upholding human rights in advertising

We have established the Yakult Group Advertising Policy for responsible advertising. With this Policy as our overarching concept, we are committed to upholding human rights, including the rights of children.

#### ■ Avoiding discriminatory language and protecting copyrights and portrait rights

In our advertising, we consciously avoid slanderous or discriminatory language pertaining to race, ethnicity, nationality, origin, language, gender, age, occupation, educational background, physical characteristics, health, or beliefs. We always obtain the relevant approval to ensure we do not infringe on copyrights, portrait rights, and other rights held by third parties.

#### ■ Children and advertising

From the perspective of respecting and promoting the rights of children, we never engage in inappropriate advertising or communication which could have a negative impact on children, or which exploits children's curiosity, imagination, developmental characteristics, or lack of knowledge/experience. When filming or producing advertisements featuring children, we always put the children's safety and health first, taking care not to violate their human rights.

Related information ▶ p. 73 Customer satisfaction: Honest and responsible advertising ▶▶▶

## Protecting employees' human rights and raising awareness

#### ■ Employee consultation desk

We have established both an internal consultation desk (Health Management Office) and an external consultation desk as a means to enhance and expand our consultation system for employees concerning mental health, harassment and related issues. In particular, our external consultation desk has enabled us to further improve our consultation system by providing face-to-face counseling in addition to email and phone consultations.

We have broadened the scope of the system so that not only employees but also their family members can receive consultations. This makes it possible to address concerns in their personal lives as well as issues at work.

#### ■ Training on human rights

Training on human rights is given as needed, such as when a new recruit joins the Company. The training includes a lecture on basic knowledge concerning human rights and harassment, and seeks to deepen understanding of the risks involved in inadvertently violating a person's human rights, which includes discrimination and prejudice arising from common assumptions. We pay particular attention to ensure that individuals become neither a perpetrator nor a victim.

In fiscal 2021, we held eight workshops for compliance personnel to raise awareness and basic knowledge of workplace harassment.

## Upholding human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic

### ■ Responding to changes in the labor environment

When employees are working from home, based on the same principles as usual, they do not work overtime unless absolutely necessary, and overtime must be approved in advance by a supervisor. We are striving to gain an accurate picture of working hours through better communication between supervisors and staff.

### ■ Production facilities in and outside Japan

The most important role of our production facilities is to ensure a stable supply of safe and reliable products. Therefore, as a general rule, employees involved in manufacturing still commute to work. Measures to prevent infection are being thoroughly implemented, along with strict rules for dealing with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 among employees.

### ■ Protecting the human rights of infected individuals

Information concerning cases of infectious diseases including COVID-19 is handled carefully to protect the privacy of those affected, and is managed to prevent it being disclosed or spread. We are raising awareness of the message that “anyone could be infected” to avoid any stigma associated with confirmed or suspected cases of infections.

## Preventing harassment

The Yakult Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct state zero tolerance for any form of harassment, including power harassment and sexual harassment.

Harassment can directly affect the victim’s physical and mental health, as well as reducing workers’ motivation, disturbing order in the workplace, and worsening the working environment. There is also a risk of direct or indirect damage from lawsuits and damage to our corporate image, so we are doing all we can to prevent harassment.

### ■ Compliance training

We run level-specific compliance training according to employees’ roles and responsibilities, to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace. Particularly for managers, we run training sessions based on legal case studies, encouraging them to take appropriate action.

Related information [p. 91 Compliance training >>>](#)

### ■ Compliance newsletter

Our compliance newsletter regularly covers topics like power harassment and sexual harassment to raise awareness of these issues.

Related information [p. 91 Compliance newsletter >>>](#)

### ■ Action in cases of harassment

We have designated compliance personnel within each department, business site and Group company to act as points of contact for matters relating to non-compliance, including harassment.

We will take care to protect privacy when dealing with suspected cases of harassment, and strict action will be taken against perpetrators if harassment is confirmed.

### ■ Action for suppliers

We ensure that our suppliers also take action to prevent harassment, based on the Yakult Group CSR Procurement Policy.

Related information [p. 58 Supply chain management > Promoting sustainable procurement >>>](#)

### ■ Establishment of a harassment committee

Yakult Danone India Pvt. Ltd. has established a seven-member sexual harassment committee comprising senior staff from the company and outside legal experts in accordance with an Indian legal mandate. In 2021, the committee held two regular meetings and promoted improvements in the working environment.

## Respecting human rights and cultural diversity around the world

The Yakult Group operates globally, complying with the laws and regulations in each country and region, and respecting human rights, and cultural and religious diversity.

### ■ Initiatives in Japan

A proper understanding of human rights is an essential part of being a member of society. Our training for new recruits covers the need to accept different values due to differences in race, gender, age and nationality, and emphasizes the importance of harnessing this diversity in our business.

### ■ Halal certification: Outside Japan

Eight of our plants outside Japan have obtained Halal certification, and products are labeled with the Halal certification symbol so that Muslim customers can drink Yakult products with confidence.



Halal certification symbol

## Upholding human rights in the hiring process

The Yakult Group currently operates in 40 countries and regions including Japan and we hire locally, without discriminating between employees on the grounds of nationality or place of origin. We hire employees on the principle of “optimal personnel assignment based on abilities, aspirations, and aptitude, and regardless of age, gender, nationality, or educational background.

### ■ Initiatives outside Japan

#### • Initiatives in the US: Yakult U.S.A. Inc.

Yakult U.S.A. Inc. has developed a list of questions to use and avoid in employment interviews. Questions which are not relevant to the job, such as asking about an applicant’s religion or place of birth, are not allowed, and care is taken to avoid any discrimination during the hiring process.

#### Questions to use and avoid during a job interview (sample)

Use	Topic	Avoid
Name	Name	Maiden name
Address	Address	Home-owner or rented
“Do you have proof that you can work legally in the US?”	Place of birth; citizenship	Questions about the place of birth of the applicant, applicants’ parents, relatives or spouse “Are you an American citizen?”
Proficiency in languages other than English (reading, writing, conversational) relating to the job	Ethnic origin	Questions about the nationality, ancestry, ethnic origin, or lineage of the applicant or their parents, relatives or spouse “What is your native language?” “Do you speak a language other than English with your family?”
Statement of company policy restricting family/relatives from working together	Age, gender, marital status, family status	Questions about age, gender, marital status, children and spouse/Questions about pregnancy, childbirth, possibility of future pregnancy “Do you intend to get married?”
Questions about working hours, dates, and shifts “Will you be able to work on Sundays?”	Religion	Questions about religion/Inquiring about the timing of religious observances

### ■ Initiatives in Japan

In Japan, just like in the US, employees who will be responsible for conducting job interviews are briefed about human rights so they avoid asking questions about religion or beliefs during interviews.

## Response to local human rights due diligence legislation

### ■ UK Modern Slavery Act: Yakult UK Ltd.

Yakult UK Ltd. publishes statements on its efforts to adhere to the country’s Modern Slavery Act. The company continues to check that its business partners (such as logistics companies) have produced statements in line with the Modern Slavery Act, and requires signed statements from them. The company also requires suppliers with total annual sales of under 36 million pounds to have a clear awareness of its relevant initiatives, which helps promote the protection of human rights across the entire supply chain.

### ■ Response to Australian Modern Slavery Act: Yakult Australia Pty. Ltd.

Australia’s Modern Slavery Act was enacted in January 2019. Companies with an annual turnover of over 100 million Australian dollars must report annually on measures to prevent forced labor in their operations and supply chains. Yakult Australia Pty. Ltd. is currently not subject to this act, but agrees with its intentions, and is working proactively to promote protection of human rights in the entire supply chain, including suppliers and business partners.

### ■ California Transparency in Supply Chains Act: Yakult U.S.A. Inc.

The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act came into effect in January 2012. Retailers and manufacturers operating in California, with worldwide annual revenues of 100 million dollars or more, are required to disclose their efforts to eradicate human trafficking and slavery.

Yakult Honsha and Yakult U.S.A. Inc. are not currently subject to this Act, but agree with its intentions, and are actively working to improve transparency of information and respect for human rights within the supply chain.