

# Child Safeguarding Policy

## **COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY IS MANDATORY**

Save the Children's vision is for a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. As a Child Rights organisation, we will do whatever it takes to keep children safe, on track and connected to community and culture.

## **Purpose and scope**

### ***The purpose of this policy is to:***

- Ensure children, young people and families understand the protective practices put in place by Save the Children representatives to keep them safe from deliberate or inadvertent harm.
- Ensure everyone recognises and embraces their critical role in keeping children safe and fostering a culture of openness and the participation of children and young people.
- Ensure diverse cultural perspectives are respected, while recognising that such differences do not diminish a child's right to be safe, or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm. This applies to all children regardless of age, culture, religion, gender or disability.

This policy applies to all Save the Children Australia representatives and partners (as defined under the Definitions section of this policy) across all workplaces we operate in and all activities we undertake.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Child Safeguarding Policy Guidelines that have been developed to assist adhering to this policy statements.

The policy statements and guidelines are aligned with Save the Children Global Child Safeguarding Protocol, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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## **Policy Statements**

1. Representatives and partner staff **must** demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour in their private and professional lives in accordance with the Code of Conduct, and never abuse the trust that comes with being a member of Save the Children.
2. Representatives and partners **must** report any actual or suspected harm to a child or young person in accordance with the Safeguarding Procedure, and ensure every decision is made in the best interests of the child.
3. Representatives and partners **must** understand and acknowledge this policy and adhere to the child safeguarding training curricula relevant to their role.
4. Program staff **must** drive an honest, safe, two-way communication process between themselves and children, representatives, partners, parents and communities – welcoming scrutiny, making time to listen to them, and encouraging the expression of different views.
5. Program staff **must** ensure all children, young people, families and carers are informed about program activities, the rights and responsibilities of the people involved and have access to a support and feedback mechanism.

6. Program managers **must** ensure the voice of the child is systematically embedded in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Specific consideration must be given to the needs of vulnerable groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Pacific children, children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
7. Senior advisors, Program leads and Awards staff **must** ensure that every program and activity has a risk assessment that identifies and mitigates risks to child safety, including in physical, emotional and online spaces.
8. Senior advisers, Project leads and Awards staff **must** ensure all program partnership arrangements have appropriate agreements in place, partner agencies have been fully assessed for adequate safeguarding capabilities, and have a capacity strengthening plan in place, as required.
9. People managers **must** ensure that appropriate checks and monitoring are used to identify suitable representatives and deter unsuitable candidates and provide adequate professional supervision and development for all staff and volunteers, as specified in the Save the Children Recruitment Standards.
10. The Board, People, Culture & Risk team and relevant business units **must** be held accountable for maintaining, reviewing and updating the full suite of Child Safeguarding policies, procedures and other relevant guidance in line with this policy.

Any form of child abuse or harm committed by representatives constitute acts of gross misconduct, are in breach of the policy, and can lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal, and criminal proceedings. For partner staff, breaches can lead to termination of agreement and criminal proceedings. Failure to meet training requirements may lead to re-allocation of duties and performance management until compulsory activities are complete.

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## Relevant other policies

Please refer to the Child Safeguarding Guidelines, Safeguarding Procedure, Safeguarding Reporting Process and other relevant policies and processes for more details and specific directions on how to apply this Policy, including:

- **Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Exploitation Policy:** ensuring a safe and healthy workplace.
  - **Code of Conduct:** outlines expected behaviour, relationships, attitudes and responsibilities.
  - **Complaints Handling Policy:** responsibilities for how complaints and feedback will be handled.
  - **Child Safeguarding Guidelines:** commitment to keeping children safe and connected to community and culture.
  - **Storytelling and Image Policy and Guidelines:** ensuring the appropriate collection, assessment and consent for use of images and stories.
  - **Prevention of Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment Policy and Guidelines:** ensuring representatives take action to prevent sexual misconduct and are prohibited to sexually exploit, abuse and harass adults and communities.
  - **Partnership Framework, Contact Standards, Donation Acceptance and Refusal Policy, and Purchasing & Procurement Policy and Guidelines:** describes expectations of partners and due-diligence, capacity building and monitoring activities.
  - **Privacy Statement, Information and Technology Policy and Guidelines, and Social Media Standards:** describes personal and professional acceptable use and sharing of information, systems and social media.
  - **Records Retention Standards:** requirements and approach for retention of corporate records.
  - **Recruitment Standards, Safeguarding Compliance Standards, Volunteer Policy, Engaging Independent Consultants Policy:** ensuring appropriate screening and behavioural checks and sign-on to key organisational policies.
  - **Risk Management Policy and Guidelines:** ensuring that risks are identified, aggregated and communicated to higher levels of management.
  - **Safeguarding Reporting Process:** process for reporting concerns and allegations of safeguarding breaches.
  - **Safeguarding Procedure:** procedure for the implementation of safeguarding policy and guidelines commitments.
  - **Safer Partnerships Core Standards:** outline the minimum requirements that each project that is implemented in cooperation with a partner, needs to adhere to.
  - **Safety and Security Policy:** creating a safe and secure environment.
  - **Whistleblower Policy, Guidelines and Procedures:** to raise concerns regarding serious wrongdoing and where there is a fear of reprisal for making a report through usual mechanisms.
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## Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Child</b>	Anyone under the age of 18 years.
<b>Harm</b>	<p>Refers to anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly causes intentional or unintentional abuse including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical:</b> involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g., hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).</li> <li>• <b>Sexual:</b> includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in child sexual abuse material and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, grooming, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material. This also includes sexually harmful behaviour, as a developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people towards younger children, peers, older children or adults, and which may be harmful or abusive. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, the organisation must respond to the safeguarding needs of all children involved (i.e. the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards).</li> <li>• <b>Emotional:</b> includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.</li> <li>• <b>Exposure to Family Violence:</b> refers to the harm caused to a child through the exposure to any violence between family members, typically where the perpetrator exercises power and control over another person.</li> <li>• <b>Neglect:</b> Neglect describes the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.</li> <li>• <b>Exploitation:</b> means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual or other purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically.</li> </ul>
<b>Representatives</b>	<p>Save the Children Australia permanent, maximum term and casual staff, trustees and board members, volunteers, interns, work experience/placement students and individual contractors and consultants (referred to as representatives).</p> <p>Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit Save the Children programs or offices in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting our programs or offices (during this time they are referred to as representatives).</p>
<b>Partners</b>	Individuals, groups or organisations (including consortiums) who have a formal/contractual relationship with Save the Children Australia that involves any contact with children (referred to as partners or staff of partner agencies).
<b>Leaders</b>	Board, CEO, Senior Management Team, Business Unit and Team Leaders, etc.

PREVIOUS VERSION	CURRENT VERSION	COMMENTS	AUTHOR	APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	APPROVED BY BPRC	REVIEW DATE
2.0	3	Simplify statements and deal with operational issues	Head of Risk Support	15 Nov 2018	28 Nov 2018	Q3 2020
3.0	4	Multiple changes proposed by Child Wise applied throughout	Head of Safeguarding	2 Mar 2021	18 Mar 2021	Q2 2023

## Statement to be signed by all Save the Children representatives

I, ..... (insert name) acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to comply with Save the Children Australia's Child Safeguarding Policy and relevant associated guidelines.

I understand and agree that it is my responsibility, as a person employed/engaged by Save the Children Australia, to abide by this policy and avoid actions that are abusive or exploitative of children and young people or could be construed as such.

I know what to expect if a report is made by me or an allegation is made against me.

I understand and agree that a breach of the Policy may provide grounds for my employment/engagement with Save the Children to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of the Policy could result in criminal prosecution.

I authorise Save the Children Australia to undertake any necessary inquiries, including criminal record checks and reference checks, as part of my appointment or recruitment process.

**Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....