



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT



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INTRODUCTION,
PURPOSE &
HOW TO USE THE
GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

A duty of care

As effective development organisations, NGO's have a duty of care to ensure the safety of children involved in and impacted by their work, both here in Australia and overseas. This can be achieved by building an environment that is safe for children. Being a child safe organisation means proactively implementing child protection measures that safe guard children and building the capacity of all stakeholders so that they understand what child protection is and are committed to their responsibility for keeping children safe.

A vital element in building and maintaining a child safe organisation is to develop and implement an active and robust child protection policy and procedures. As well as minimising risks to children, a child protection policy serves to protect organisations and their representatives by providing information on child protection and clear guidelines and professional standards for their work with children. A child protection policy also ensures that allegations of child abuse are investigated and dealt with appropriately.

ACFID Code of Conduct

The ACFID Code of Conduct addresses safeguarding at a number of levels, but the [Commitment at 1.4](#) targets child protection policies and processes in its entirety. It requires our members to “advance the safeguarding of children”. Commitment 1.4 is implemented through three compliance indicators.

[Compliance Indicator 1.4.1](#) of the ACFID Code of Conduct requires members to “demonstrate their organisational commitment to the safeguarding of children”. Members must also extend this compliance indicator, and the below mentioned verifier, to partners through their MoU's (or similar). The evidence that members are required to have in place, to provide compliance with this indicator, is articulated in the verifier as listed below.

A policy document applicable to all governing body Members, staff, volunteers and visitors to projects, that commits the Member to:

- Effective leadership to enable the safeguarding of children.
- Communication of the Child Safeguarding Policy and practices to all governing body Members, staff, volunteers and visitors to project.

- Recruitment screening processes for all personnel in contact with children which include:
 - Criminal record checks before engagement; statutory declarations or local legal equivalent where criminal record checks are unavailable or unreliable.
 - Verbal referee checks.
 - The following additional screening measure for all personnel working with children;
 - Behavioural-based interview questions.
- Processes for assessing risk and monitoring and evaluating risk and child safeguarding processes at all stages of the initiative.
- Use of images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education which ensures the privacy and safeguarding of children.
- If relevant, an overview of the processes to ensure child safeguarding in sponsorship/overseas volunteer programs and other high-risk activities that facilitate access to children and young people.
- Child safeguarding training for all personnel.
- Employment contracts which contain provisions for the prevention of a person from working with children if they present an unacceptable risk to children; dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties for any employee who breaches the child protection code of conduct.
- Regular reviews of the child safeguarding policy.

[Compliance Indicator 1.4.2](#) of the ACFID Code of Conduct requires members to “have a code of conduct that advances child safeguarding behaviours.”

Members must also extend this compliance indicator, and the below mentioned verifier, to partners through their MoU's (or similar). The evidence that members are required to have in place, to provide compliance with this indicator, is articulated in the verifier as below:

The Code of Conduct must be signed by relevant staff, volunteers, partners and project visitors.

All members must have a documented code of conduct or behaviour in place that covers the following with regard to child safeguarding:

- Appropriate language.
- Appropriate communications.
- Banning of alcohol and drugs.
- Gifts to children.
- Physical contact with children.
- Banning of sexual relations with children.
- Child labour.
- Photos and images.
- Reporting responsibilities.

[Compliance Indicator 1.4.3](#) of the ACFID Code of Conduct requires members to “have a documented approaches to child safeguarding incident reporting procedure and complaints handling that are child-focused, aligned with principles of privacy and promotes safety and dignity.”

Members must also extend this compliance indicator, and the below mentioned verifier, to partners through their MoU’s (or similar). The evidence that members are required to have in place, to provide compliance with this indicator, is articulated in the verifier as below:

All members must have documented and accessible policies and/or procedures for child safeguarding incident reporting and child friendly complaints handling in place that must reflect the following principles:

- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people are prioritised.
- Consistency with relevant legislation, including compliance with mandatory reporting responsibilities, privacy, and employment law.
- Protection of all parties involved in the complaint of concern.
- Confidentiality (as distinct from secrecy).
- Expedient reporting.
- Truthfulness.
- Fairness.
- Professionalism

Further guidance around the above requirements, along with a number of resources, can be found on the Good Practice Toolkit in the ‘Guidance and Resources’ section.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

These child safeguarding policy development guidelines have been produced to provide guidance to signatory organisations on how to develop, implement and review their child safeguarding policies and procedures. They are considered to be an example of good practice in safeguarding children and have been developed in a way that reflects both international and domestic good practice child safeguarding standards and the compliance expectations of the ACFID Code of Conduct.

This document combines guidelines for the development and/or review of child safeguarding policies and to a lesser extent, child safeguarding procedures in one document.

A separate child safeguarding procedures manual should be created to operationalise the organisation's child safeguarding policy. Procedures will include specific guidelines on how the organisation will implement the different components of the policy and may provide links to other organisational and departmental documents, charters, policies, codes and procedure manuals in order to ensure that the child safeguarding policy is relevant and integrated into the organisational culture.

Child Safeguarding: Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds (adapted from DFAT Child Protection Policy).

An activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly that arising from child exploitation and abuse.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

There is no one child safeguarding policy that fits all Non-Government Development Organisations (NGDOs), therefore, these guidelines have been developed with the intention of them being used to support a consultative, organisational reflection and risk assessment process that identifies where and how child protection relates to an organisation's functions and activities.

An organisation's child safeguarding policy should reflect the organisation's size, functions, types of activities and programs, the type and level of contact with children and young people, the risks presented to children and young people and how they are managed. The size of the policy may therefore vary between organisations, dependent on these factors and the level and type of risk factors faced by each organisation.

Do:

- Use the guidelines to inform your policy development or review process
- Use some of the examples if they relate to / reflect your organisation practice/needs
- Undertake a process of 'unpacking your organisation, reflecting on your operations and systems, assessing the risks to children as a result of your functions and activities and develop a policy based on this.
- Identify additional resource requirements which may be required to effectively implement all aspects of your child safeguarding policy.

Don't:

Use these guidelines as a 'cut and paste' template for writing your child safeguarding policy. Your child safeguarding policy should be tailored to your organisation.

The guidelines are divided into three parts:

- Steps to develop and implement a child safeguarding policy
- An overview of the key elements of a good practice child safeguarding policy and
- Guidelines and tips for content for the development of each section of the policy.



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PART 1: STEPS TO
DEVELOP AND
IMPLEMENT A CHILD
SAFEGUARDING
POLICY ('CSP')



PART 1: STEPS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY ('CSP')

STEP 1	CONSULTATION AND DISCUSSION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION
	<p>In order for a CSP to be relevant, robust and effective it is important to engage stakeholders from across the organisation in its development. This will assist to foster a sense of responsibility and ownership of child protection and the policy across the organisation.</p> <p>Identify key stakeholders for participation in the policy development process. Ideally (depending on the size of your organisation) participation will incorporate staff from across the organisation (staff from HR, program, marketing and communications, IT etc). Whilst it is recommended to have a lead to facilitate the development of the policy, this group of staff could form a formal child protection working group who are responsible for both policy development and communicating the policy to their departmental peers.</p> <p>Work together to define the objectives and purpose of the child safeguarding policy for your organisation and the issues to be addressed within the policy document as well as the process for developing it.</p> <p>Engage with children and young people to ensure their wishes and views are incorporated. Work with children and young people to develop a child friendly version of the CSP. This will help you understand what it is that makes children be and feel safe.</p> <p>Engage with your implementation partners to gain an insight into cultural understandings and practices of child safeguarding and abuse, partner's practice and capacity to implement the policy.</p>
STEP 2	EXTERNAL CONSULTATION
	<p>Consulting with external stakeholders helps to gain an understanding of good practice, legislative requirements, support systems and compliance standards as well as to establish child protection networks that can be beneficial as you move forward with your policy implementation.</p> <p>Consult widely to inform your CSP development, for example; child protection specialists, other NGDO's and child focused organisations, lawyers and police.</p> <p>Include consideration of funding and implementing partners to ensure compliance with their CSP requirements and standards.</p>

Step 3	STOCK TAKE
	<p>When developing a CSP it is important to review existing organisational policies, procedures and systems.</p> <p>Review your existing policies, procedures and systems to identify what is already in place that protects children (which can then be summarised and referred/linked to in the CSP) and identify any gaps/weaknesses and child protection risks (that can be addressed in the CSP and through the strengthening of existing procedures and systems or the development of new ones).</p>
Step 4	RISK ASSESSMENT
	<p>Building a child safe organisation requires you to accurately and honestly reflect on your organisational work and practices in order to identify your strengths and weaknesses in being able to keep children safe.</p> <p>Review all activities and functions of your organisation and their potential for posing a risk to and impacting children. This can be achieved through facilitated departmental workshops or by establishing a working group where personnel ‘unpack’ their functions and activities and help to identify existing practices that protect children but also any potential risks to children.</p> <p>In all areas identified as being a risk to or impacting on children, determine how your CSP and the strengthening or development of procedures and systems will address and reduce any identified risk. Ensure that higher risk areas are noted for additional management and monitoring. High risk activities and programs such as child sponsorship, overseas visits, facilitating residential care programs, children’s events/clubs, are likely to require comprehensive procedures to be developed and included in or linked to the CSP.</p> <p>During this stage consider the diverse needs of the children that you work with. Not all children will have the same protection needs. Some are likely to be more vulnerable than others. Consider how a child’s vulnerability is affected by their age, stage of development, gender, ability as well as by social, cultural and economic factors.</p>
Step 5	DRAFTING A CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY
	<p>A CSP should be developed based on the above-mentioned risk assessment process and reflect the organisations size, nature, functions, program delivery structure and type and level of contact with children and young people. During this process it will be important to think about roles and responsibilities for implementing the CSP, your organisations vision, values and commitment to children.</p> <p>Consider your stakeholder groups when designing the format of your policy. For example, some of the sections may need to be translated, or to be attached as annexes to enhance accessibility for certain stakeholders, such as a child-friendly version designed for children and young people.</p> <p>Make sure the final document is signed off at management and board levels.</p>

Step 6 COMMUNICATING THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

After finalising your child safeguarding policy, it will be important to consider how best to share it with your key stakeholders. Agency approaches may differ depending on the nature of their operations. An organisation’s child safeguarding policy can be distributed to stakeholders through some of the following mechanisms:

- Staff/Contractors/ Board and Volunteers: Recruitment, induction packages and training on an ongoing basis; include in contract agreements
- Partners and suppliers: The Code requires the policy and its standards to be extended to partners through MOUs or similar. Hence inclusion of the child safeguarding policy as part of contracting or partnership agreements, and partner training is essential.
- Project visitors: Include the child safeguarding policy in pre-departure briefing/documentation
- Supporters: Include reference to the child safeguarding policy in sign up mechanisms and terms and conditions and marketing and communications materials. Children and communities: Translate the policy in local language; develop a child friendly version, posters on the CSP in field offices, briefings in community meetings.

Placing your CSP on your website is a requirement of the Code (7.3.4). Other methods could include displaying in your offices and other public forums, which will assist in demonstrating your commitment to being a child safe organisation.


Step 7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Whilst it is important to have a child safeguarding policy in place, it is equally important to regularly monitor its implementation. The creation of a simple checklist to use as part of a regular (preferably annual) internal audit or review is one way to monitor policy implementation. This exercise can prove helpful in gaining whole of agency/stakeholder ownership of the policy and for identifying ongoing or new resource requirements. You could undertake this process internally or participate in a peer review with another organisation. The Code requires regular reviews of the child safeguarding policy and a 2-3 year review period is recommended.



See ANNEX 1 for guidance on how to undertake a child protection risk assessment of your organisation.

An online self-assessment tool from Keeping Children Safe is available at: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/child-safeguarding-self-assessment/>



PART 2: KEY ELEMENTS
OF A GOOD PRACTICE
CHILD SAFEGUARDING
POLICY

PART 2: KEY ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PRACTICE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Your child safeguarding policy should be tailored to your organisation, and include the following key elements:

Section of Policy		Overview of Section
A	TITLE OF POLICY	The title is included to describe the intent of the policy.
B	INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE	The introduction will describe the organisation's mission, vision, purpose and nature of programs. A preamble to the CSP could also be included to explain how child safeguarding is relevant to the organisation and why the organisation developed a CSP.
C	STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING	The statement of commitment will describe the stance of the organisation regarding child abuse and outline the organisations commitment to child safeguarding, its duty of care as well as its' obligations to protect children. The statement should clearly communicate that the organisation takes child safeguarding and its duty of care seriously.
D	PURPOSE OF THE POLICY	The purpose will explain the aims and objectives of the CSP. Overall the policy will aim to protect children by outlining systems and mechanisms for awareness raising, prevention, reporting and responding to child safeguarding issues. It is in this section that you can include a statement about the policy also being in place to protect personnel and other stakeholders by providing clear behaviour protocols.
E	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	The guiding principles are the underlying philosophical principles on which the CSP is based.
F	CONTEXT	This section will make reference to the problem of child abuse and denial of children's protection rights as well as outlining the context in which the organisation works, with a particular emphasis on the child protection risks to the organisation.
G	DEFINITIONS	This section will provide definitions of child abuse, protection, safeguarding and others as relevant to the CSP.

Section of Policy		Overview of Section
H	SCOPE OF THE POLICY	The scope will define the relevant stakeholders, or to whom the policy refers, which needs to include staff, volunteers, board members, visitors to projects and partners. It should also include representatives of your organisation, which could include sponsors, donors, suppliers, contractors and consultants.
I	CODE OF CONDUCT	A code of conduct is a clear, organisational guide of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to working with children. It acts to establish a common understanding of the standards of behaviour and appropriate boundaries expected of personnel and associates. It will provide guidance to staff and others for maintaining professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings by promoting transparency and accountability. It is required by the Code in 1.4.2. It should form part of the CSP or be included as an attachment.
J	RISK MANAGEMENT	This section will discuss or reference how the organisation assesses and mitigates risk to children in all its operations, programs and activities that involve contact with children.
K	OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION AND USE OF CHILDREN'S IMAGES GUIDELINES	This section will provide an overview of how children are protected when the organisation uses children's images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education.
L	PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	This section should outline how the organisation will implement child safeguarding measures within the recruitment and selection process. The aim is to employ the most suitable people for the position, and also to reduce the risk of engaging people who may pose a risk to children.
M	EDUCATING THE ORGANISATION ON CHILD ABUSE AND THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY	This section will describe how the organisation will educate staff and others about child abuse and the CSP.

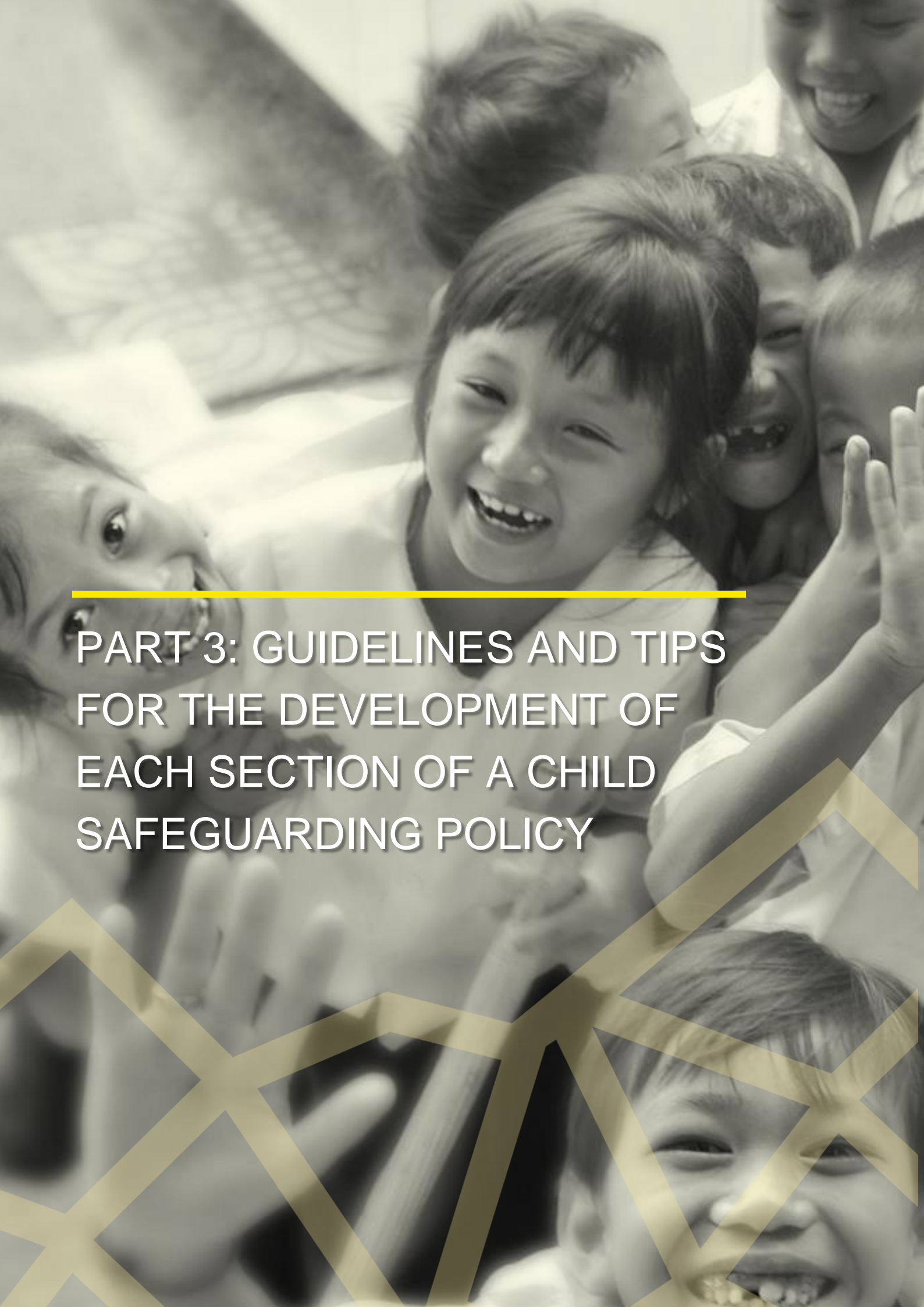
Section of Policy		Overview of Section
N	WORKING WITH PARTNERS	This section will provide an overview of how the organisation works with partners to ensure child safeguarding in all partnership activities and programs.
O	PROGRAMS THAT FACILITATE DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN	This section will provide an overview of the child safeguarding measures that are in place if your organisation implements programs that facilitate direct access or communication with children such as sponsorship, donor field visits, overseas volunteer programs etc.
P	WORKING IN EMERGENCY CONTEXTS	This section will provide an overview of the child safeguarding measures you undertake if your organisation works in emergency contexts.
Q	RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS	This section will provide a clear procedure for the reporting and management of child abuse concerns in Australia and in the countries where your programs are implemented.
R	INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	This section will provide an overview of the ways in which the views of children and young people are incorporated into your activities and programs and how they are involved in the child safeguarding measures of the organisation, for example, the development of a child friendly code of conduct.
S	POLICY REVIEW	This will be a statement regarding how often you will review your CSP and your commitment to keeping the CSP current and reflective of good practice standards.



TIP

Also consider including:

- See ANNEX 1 for guidance on how to undertake a child protection risk assessment of your organisation.
- An online self-assessment tool from Keeping Children Safe is available at: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/child-safeguarding-self-assessment/>



**PART 3: GUIDELINES AND TIPS
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
EACH SECTION OF A CHILD
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

PART 3: GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH SECTION OF A CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

SECTION A — TITLE OF POLICY

The title of your CSP could be as specific as Child Safeguarding Policy or be broader to include child rights or child safety. As part of the development of your CSP it is worthwhile discussing your organisation's approach to safe guarding children and the principles that should be included in the policy, this can help when it comes to selecting the title.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY's) Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP)

(AGENCY's) Child Safe Policy

(AGENCY's) Child Protection Policy

SECTION B — INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) recognises that by the nature of our work, our operations may pose a risk to children; therefore, we have developed this child safeguarding policy to proactively work to mitigate those risks.

The problem of child abuse is a global one, however, in line with our mission to (AGENCY to ADD) we will work, through the implementation of this child safeguarding policy, to address the denial of children's protection rights and ensure that children are not harmed in any way as a result of their involvement in our work.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the foundation of (AGENCY's) work on child safeguarding. Children's rights as enshrined in the (CRC) act as the motivation for both our internal and external child protection measures and activities.

SECTION C – STATEMENT ON COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING

The statements made in this section will send a message to personnel, associates and broader community that your organisation takes child safeguarding and its duty of care seriously and considers it a high priority.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We support the rights of children and will act to ensure a child safe environment is maintained.

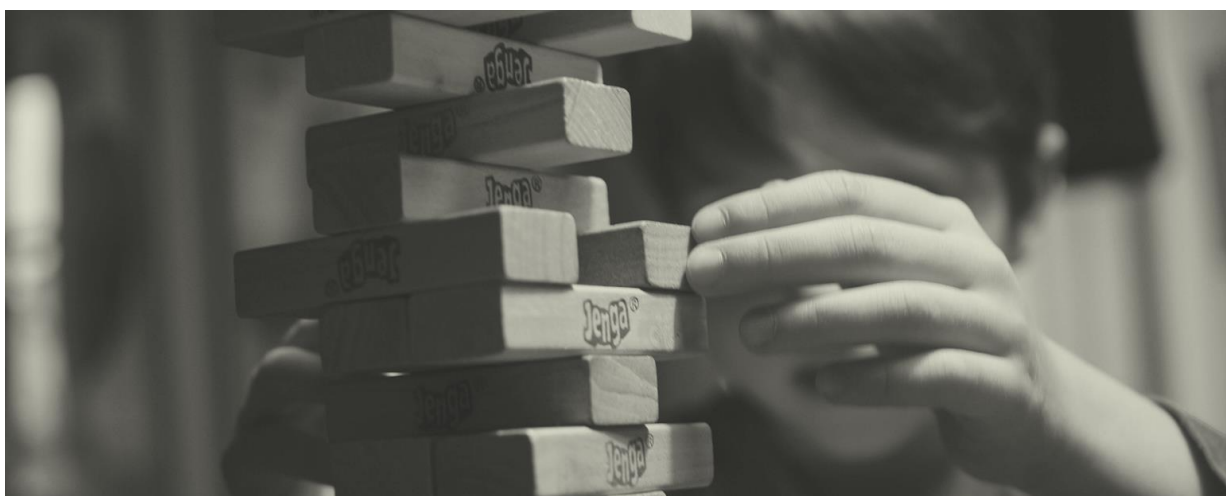
(AGENCY) is committed to the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (UNCRC). (AGENCY) will uphold these rights.

(AGENCY) takes its duty of care seriously and will aim at all times to provide the safest possible programs and environments for children. This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm of children.

(AGENCY) has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. (AGENCY) is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that all children and young people with whom we work (both here in Australia and overseas in our development programs) are provided a child safe environment at all times.

This child protection policy demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the protection of children and young people at all times. This will be realised by providing all personnel who have contact with children the necessary training and skills to implement this policy.

It is the responsibility of the management team to ensure the policy and related procedures are implemented and enforced.



SECTION D — PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose will explain the aims and objectives of the CSP. It is here that it is useful to highlight that the CSP serves to protect personnel and associates as well as children and young people.

It is in this section that the importance of the policy document to organisational accountability and compliance as well as the relevance to personnel and associates and the work that they do for your organisation can be articulated.

EXAMPLES:

This CSP has been developed to provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse in (AGENCY)'s programs. It will outline a range of risk management strategies that will be implemented to reduce the risk of children being harmed.

The CSP will demonstrate (AGENCY)'s commitment to protect children from harm and abuse.

The CSP aims to educate staff and others about child abuse and promote a child safe culture where everyone is committed to keeping children safe.

The CSP aims to create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.

The CSP will provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse. It provides guidance to staff and associates on how to work respectfully and effectively with children. This will provide all stakeholders, including staff and associates with a safe working environment.

As a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, (AGENCY) is obliged to have policies and procedures implemented which promote the safety and well-being of all children accessing its services and programs, in particular to minimise the risk of abuse to children (See [Commitment 1.4](#) of the ACFID Code of Conduct).

(AGENCY) is obliged to adhere to national, local and international child protection criminal laws, which prohibit the abuse and exploitation of children. These include local laws where (AGENCY)'s programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.



For information on child protection legislation visit:

- Australian state and territory child protection legislation:
<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation>

SECTION E — GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) believes that any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the universal foundation for child protection. The fundamental principle of the Convention is that children have their own indivisible rights.

(AGENCY) believes that all children should be equally protected regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, age, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status, physical or mental health and criminal background.

(AGENCY) recognises its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe from harm.

(AGENCY) believes that all children have the right to be safe at all times. We will proactively work to provide safe and protective programs, activities and environments.

All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children will be made based on the Best Interests of the Child Principle.

(AGENCY) takes seriously our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children.

The protection of children is the responsibility of all personnel, partners and associates of (AGENCY).

Where possible, children will be consulted in the development of the CSP and the implementation of child safe practices. Children in our programs should be given opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them.

Adherence to this CSP is a mandatory requirement for all personnel, partners and associates of (AGENCY)

(AGENCY) will ensure that all staff and relevant stakeholders are made aware of the CPP and their responsibilities

SECTION F — CONTEXT

It is useful to include some information about the problem of child abuse and the denial of children's protection rights (globally, nationally – if relevant to your work) as well as the potential risk to children's protection posed by your organisation's operations in this section. This will assist stakeholders to understand the reality of child abuse and how it relates to the organisation's operations as well as the reasons why the organisation has prioritised making a commitment to protecting children.

Using statistics on child abuse can be a powerful way to draw attention to the abuse faced by children, however make sure they are current and from reputable sources. It is good practice to review and update statistics when you undertake a review of the policy.

EXAMPLES:

Child abuse is a global problem that affects both boys and girls. It has existed since the beginning of time and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Children are abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect.

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than others. Children living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children from minority groups, children living in residential care, children living in emergency or conflict situations, children on the move and others are often at higher risk of abuse than others.

Around the world children are forced to endure the most hazardous forms of child labour, girls are subjected to early enforced marriage, children are kidnapped and forced into armed conflict as soldiers or sexually exploited by combatants. Children are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation (including online) and experience severe corporal punishment in schools.

While most child abuse occurs within families and communities, children also experience abuse and exploitation in organisations which provide them with support and services. Experience has found that physical, emotional abuse and neglect in child focused organisations and institutions are less systematic and usually un-planned. It is usually the result of poor conditions, bad work practices and negligent management. However, child sexual abuse in organisations is often planned and premeditated. Child sex offenders target organisations working with children in order to gain access to children. They seek work in organisations that provide opportunities to make contact with children and an environment where their abuse may go undetected. Child sex offenders are attracted to organisations with inadequate child safeguarding policies and procedures and may seek to work overseas in developing countries and development programs where child protection laws and law enforcement is weak and where children and their families are vulnerable to exploitation

(AGENCY) works with some of the most vulnerable of the world's children. The nature of our work means we are potentially at risk of being targeted by people whom seek access to vulnerable children through our programs.

SECTION G — DEFINITIONS

It is important to include definitions in your child protection policy so that stakeholders understand what child protection and abuse is. As stakeholders of your organisation are likely to come from different backgrounds and have different life experiences, it is always helpful to include examples of behaviour that constitute each type of abuse so that stakeholders are clear regarding the behaviours that are expected of them.

Organisations often differ in the forms of abuse they define in their CSP's as some 'unpack' the four main categories more than others. It is recommended that, as a minimum, definitions for the following be included in your CPP:



As the concept of sexual abuse can be confronting, many agencies choose not to include examples of behaviour that constitute sexual abuse in their CSP's. Sexual abuse of children can be one of the main risks to children in development agencies, so it is of most importance that prohibited and abusive behaviour regarding sexual abuse is clearly defined. By doing so, the organisational position and commitment to protecting children is strengthened.

EXAMPLE WORDING:

Child Protection	is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.
Child Safeguarding	Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children including to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds
Child Abuse	abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, bullying, child labour and family violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves and in some cases; professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust also abuse children.
A child or young person	any person under the age of 18 years, unless a nation's laws recognise adulthood earlier.
Duty of Care	is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury.

EXAMPLE WORDING:

Physical abuse	occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
Emotional abuse	occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent or care giver; to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.
Neglect	is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
Sexual abuse	occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification - regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or noncontact acts, including sexualised language, voyeurism, fondling genitals or breasts, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object and exposing a child to, or involving a child in pornography.
Exploitation	Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others that are to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral and social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation



Other definition categories relevant to child safeguarding used by organisations in the sector include:

- Domestic or family violence
- Bullying
- Child sex tourism
- Particularly vulnerable children
- Children in emergencies
- Grooming
- Child exploitation materials (child pornography)
- Child labour

SECTION H — SCOPE OF THE POLICY

When developing or reviewing your CSP it is very important to map out all of your organisational stakeholders as they are the people that should be included in the Scope of the Policy section. In this section you should be clear about who is responsible for adhering to and implementing the policy. If you leave out key stakeholders you will have gaps in your organisational safeguarding measures because the stakeholders whom are excluded will not be bound by or educated about the policy.

Each organisation operates differently, so the types of stakeholders that are included in this section are likely to differ. Below is some example wording that can be used as a guide:

EXAMPLE:

This policy applies to all Personnel and Associates.

'Personnel' refers to: full time, part time, international and national and also those engaged on short term contracts such as: consultants and contractors (including researchers, photographers etc.)

'Others/Associates' refers to: visitors to our programs (including media), volunteers, board members, interns, supporters (donors, sponsors, advocates, ambassadors), trustees, members, staff in partnership agencies, and any other individuals or groups that have been brought in contact with children (including their personal information and images) while working with/supporting (AGENCY)



This section is another opportunity to demonstrate your serious commitment to keeping children safe. Do not be shy about including key stakeholders such as donors or media out of fear of scaring them away. Many people now have high expectations regarding organisational accountability and specifically seek out child safe agencies to support.

SECTION I — CODE OF CONDUCT

The Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (CS CoC) is one of your most important and useful tools in preventing child abuse in your organisation. The CS CoC is a clear organisational guide of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to working with children and young people. It establishes a common understanding of the standards of behaviour and appropriate boundaries expected of personnel and associates in order to keep children safe. It provides your organisation a basis to take disciplinary action if someone demonstrates or reports inappropriate and unsafe behaviour. The CS CoC also provides personnel and associates with clear boundaries, so they can ensure that they are not placing themselves at risk of a false allegation being made against them.

Your CS CoC should be either outlined in full within your CPP document or attached as an annex to your CPP and should be signed by all stakeholders regardless of their level of contact with children.

The CS CoC should be based on the risk assessment of your organisational operations and as relevant to your organisation address:

- Mandatory reporting
- Forms of abuse
- Physical touching / contact
- Banning of sexual relations with children
- Child labour
- Sleeping arrangements
- Sign in and out procedures
- Adult child ratios
- Respect for privacy
- Appropriate communications
- Appropriate language
- Banning of alcohol and drugs (supplying)
- Gifts to children
- Cultural sensitivities
- Confidentiality
- Toileting and bathing
- Language
- Use of images and personal information
- Favoritism
- Internet use
- Exchange of contact details
- Being alone with a child
- Adhering to child protection legislation
- Perceptions and appearances
- Transport
- Discipline
- Out of hours contact with children

EXAMPLE OF A STANDARD CODE OF CONDUCT:

Staff members and associates are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship.

All staff should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as an (AGENCY) representative and a positive role model to children.

(AGENCY) has developed this Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct to protect children, staff and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations, they are:

I WILL:

- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of (AGENCY).
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children and young people.
- Respect all children and treat them equally regardless of gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Immediately report any concerns of child abuse or breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy or this Code of Conduct according to the guidelines outlined in the Child Protection Policy.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before, or during my association with <AGENCY>
- Take responsibility for ensuring that I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- Self-assess my behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and overseas child protection legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Consult with the Child Protection Advisor /Focal Point or other relevant staff if I have any questions regarding child protection and how it relates to my work/relationship with (AGENCY)
- Comply with the (AGENCY) Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Whenever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children.
- Be a positive role model for children

I WILL NOT:

- Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, degrade or exploit children.
- Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, discriminatory, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- Invite unaccompanied children into my home/hotel or other private location, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child.
- Smack, hit or physically assault or physically punish children.
- Involve children in sexual relationships or any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Develop relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Not give or provide children with alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Not show favoritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention; Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child.
- Condone or participate in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
- Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the program times.
- Use any computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras, or social media inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.
- Hire minors for domestic or other labour.

WHEN PHOTOGRAPHING OR FILMING A CHILD, OR USING CHILDREN'S IMAGES FOR WORK-RELATED PURPOSES, I WILL:

- Obtain informed and documented consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians before photography/filming.
- Provide an explanation on how the photograph/film will be used
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- Images are honest representations of the context and facts
- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form
- Take care to ensure the local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.



IMPORTANT

It is extremely important that you develop a CS CoC that reflects the work of your organisation and the type and level of contact and interaction you have with (different types of) children. Whilst there will be some behaviour protocols that are standard and relevant to all development organisations, you should reflect upon your work and add in protocols that relate to the work you do with and for children. This will help you to minimise the potential risks that your organisations activities pose to children.



TIP

When working with partners (indigenous or those overseas) make sure to spend some time with them to understand how the CS CoC translates in their cultural context and language. Be mindful that they may have different understandings of what constitutes abuse, of the developmental needs and stages of children, of child rights, of the role of children and of how to interact with children. Together, you may need to reword some elements to ensure that it is relevant to them and their staff. This does not mean losing the principles and safeguarding aspects of what you change, rather, it assists in getting partners on-board with child safeguarding and prevents them signing onto the CS CoC because they fear losing the partnership/funding, even though they know they will not be able to fully comply.

SECTION J — RISK ASSESSMENT

In order to provide safe activities, programs and environments for children, a child protection risk assessment needs to be undertaken for all activities that involve children, either directly, or indirectly. This includes processes for monitoring and evaluating risk and child safeguarding processes, at all stages of the program/activity/initiative.

Examples of an activity that would involve children directly (or ‘working with children’) include (but are not limited to) cultural youth exchanges, residential care, child protection services, child education services, children in sports, counselling and support services for children as well as emergency response, humanitarian assistance to children and families.

Examples of an activity that would involve children indirectly (or have ‘contact with children’) include (but are not limited to) any international work, in particular working in remote/rural locations, oral and written communication (including electronic communication) relating to a child, visiting premises e.g. schools, health or residential facilities, that provide services to children, and any community consultation (data collection, surveying, training)

This section outlines how the organisation assesses and works to mitigate risk to children and is an important demonstration of accountability regarding child safeguarding.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) recognises that there a number of potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs. In recognising these risks, (AGENCY) proactively assesses and manages risks to children in order to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each activity and program and its potential impact on children. Activities and programs that involve direct work with children are considered a higher risk, and therefore require more stringent child safeguarding procedures.

Risk management is an ongoing part of all of our work involving and affecting children. (AGENCY) conducts a child protection risk assessment on every activity and project involving and affecting children prior to commencement. Mitigation strategies are put in place for any risk identified and these (and any emerging risks) are actively monitored throughout the activity/program cycle. Guidelines on conducting a child protection risk assessment guidelines are located here (INSERT LINK).

Staff and associates (as relevant) are trained in child safeguarding and risk assessment. They are expected to be continually aware of potential risks to children as well as to be actively minimising opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.

(AGENCY) uses child friendly methods to involve children in helping us to identify potential risks to their safety when they are participating in or affected by our work.

Child safeguarding is included in our organisational risk register which is monitored by our Senior Management Team.

SECTION K — OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION AND USE OF CHILDREN'S IMAGES GUIDELINES

International development agencies often use children's images and stories when promoting their programs for marketing and fundraising purposes. If an organisation does use images of children they should be mindful of how children's images and information could be used, adapted and viewed and include a section in the CSP on the use of children's images and personal information. Specific guidelines are necessary to protect the privacy of children and not to create opportunities where children can be identified and contacted by potentially harmful people.

In this section you should provide an overview of your communications and use of children's images and personal information guidelines (that are situated in either your Child Safeguarding or Communications/Marketing and Fundraising or Media Procedures).

This section and any relevant procedures should also include an analysis of the risks to children as a result of access to and use/or misuse of children's images and personal information when placed on online platforms.

This section is important as it will send a clear message to all internal (staff, volunteers, supporters/donors) and external stakeholders (such as the media), regarding your stance on working with and portraying children safely. It can help stakeholders understand that child safeguarding applies to how they talk about and portray children and that if they do not consider the child protection needs of children they may put them at risk.

EXAMPLE:

(AGENCY) will at all times portray children in a respectful, appropriate and consensual way.

A child should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.

Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.

Informed consent must always be sought and documented for the use of a child's story or image. When asking for consent, details should be given as to how, where and for how long the story, information and /or image will be used. We will provide examples of how the story/information and/or image will be used. We will explain how we cannot control the use of images once they are loaded onto the internet and that they can be viewed by anyone with internet access at any time.

There should be no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images. This includes the child's family name, community or school name.

Children should not be portrayed in isolation; instead, they should be portrayed as part of their community.

Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.

Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts.

When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.

All photographers will be screened for their suitability, including police checks where appropriate.

A risk assessment (with the child and their family) will be undertaken prior to the publishing of any information/story about an especially vulnerable child.

A story about an especially vulnerable child will not show their face or any other identifying factors.

Children should not be portrayed as weak, isolated and vulnerable. Images of children should portray them as resilient human beings and as partners in the development process.

All images and information about children will be stored safely and will only be accessed by authorised personnel.

SECTION L — PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Children in international development programs may be harmed and/or abused by staff or associates working in these programs. This harm could be intentional or unintentional. Staff and associates may harm children in a range of ways including neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Child sex offenders actively seek positions to gain access to children and seek out opportunities to offend. International development agencies are particularly vulnerable, as they often work in complex, emergency and remote environments.

Inexperienced and poorly managed staff may unintentionally harm children through physical or emotionally harmful care and disciplinary practices. Children may also be neglected by poor work practices and inadequate conditions of care.

Experience has found that abuse of children is more likely to happen in organisations that do not have rigorous child protection policies and procedures, and that do not screen or supervise staff, consultants and volunteers carefully.

Even if you don't work directly with children, the organisation may present opportunities to gain contact with children in program countries through its programs, therefore it is essential to have robust personnel recruitment and selection practices in place in order to:

- Recruit the skilled people for working with children and young people
- Reduce the risk of engaging people who pose a risk to children
- Ensure that the organisation is providing a safe and child friendly environment for children and young people

In this section you should provide an organisational commitment to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children, and then follow this with an overview of your personnel recruitment and selection practices (that are situated in either your child safeguarding or in human resources procedures).

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) is committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. (AGENCY) will not knowingly engage – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses a risk to children. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs. Our child safe practices include:

Promoting our child safe commitment on our website, in other promotional materials and in all job advertisements.

All applicants will receive a copy of (AGENCY)'s CSP and be informed of the screening requirements when they are sent the application form.

EXAMPLES:

Applicants will be required to submit a detailed application form when applying for a position. This form will ask for extensive information about the applicant's background such as dates and places of employment, education and other activities.

Job descriptions are required for all positions (staff, volunteers, consultants short/ long term etc), which describe key selection criteria and outline tasks and accountabilities.

All positions will be assessed for the level for risk in relation to contact with children. Contact with children is defined as "Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment". Working with children is defined as being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works. Positions which work with children will require the highest level of screening and the applicant must possess relevant qualifications and experience in working with children.

Recruitment screening processes for all personnel in contact with children will include criminal record checks before engagement (statutory declarations or local legal equivalent where criminal record checks are unavailable or unreliable). These include documented criminal record checks for personnel conducted for each country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the last 5 years, and for the individual's countries of citizenship.

Where the candidate is working directly with children in Australia, they may require a Working with Children Check (depending on the jurisdiction).

Recruitment screening processes for all personnel working with children will include the additional screening measure of being asked behavioural-based interview questions. Behavioural-based questions will be used to ask for examples of the candidate's past behaviour and experiences. In positions working directly working with children, the panel will explore the candidate's motivations for working with children, which will include value-based questions seeking information about the candidate's attitudes to children, professional boundaries, accountability, team work and how they have responded to concerns about children and other ethical dilemmas.

A minimum of three verbal referee checks will be required for all preferred candidates in positions that have contact with children. This would include short- and long-term positions, volunteers on placement and consultants. The candidate's most recent employer/supervisor must be one of these referees. (AGENCY) will verify the identity of the referee and make direct contact with each of these referees. Written references will not be accepted. (AGENCY) reserves the right to request additional references.

All staff will be required to provide proof of identify including birth certificate, passport, drivers licence and relevant qualifications. Original documents are required.

All positions will be subject to a probationary period depending on the length of the contract.

EXAMPLES:

Child protection will be included in staff performance reviews.

All (AGENCY) personnel, staff, volunteers, partners and project visitors will be required to read and acknowledge (AGENCY)'s CSP and read and sign (AGENCY)'s Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

(AGENCY) reserves the right to refuse employment or terminate any person's employment that may pose a risk to children. Employment contracts will contain provisions for the prevention of a person working with children if they present an unacceptable risk to children. This may include suspension or transfer to other duties for any employee who is under investigation and provisions to dismiss any employee after an investigation or who breaches the (AGENCY)'s Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct.



- Don't forget to include consultants, interns and volunteers in this section!
- Find a list of minimum standards for child safe recruitment practices in ANNEX 2

SECTION M – EDUCATING THE ORGANISATION ON CHILD ABUSE AND THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

It is important to highlight and provide an overview of your commitment to educating the stakeholders of your organisation on child safeguarding, abuse and the child safeguarding policy for a number of reasons:

- To demonstrate that you are an open and aware organisation regarding child safeguarding.
- To demonstrate that your personnel have the skills and information required to safeguard children and young people.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) is committed to educating personnel and associates in child protection and abuse, in the CSP, in how to reduce risks and create child safe environments. We will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organisation and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work. This information will include reporting child abuse if they have concerns about an (AGENCY) member of staff or other representative in the organisation.

Personnel and associates (name them as relevant- such as volunteers, board members, visitors to the field etc) will be required to participate in child protection training as part of their

EXAMPLES:

induction, in an annual intensive workshop within 6 months of their commencement, refresher training and targeted training depending on their role or contact with children.

Staff with specialist child safeguarding responsibilities will be supported to attend child safeguarding training delivered externally to stay informed of current practice.

(AGENCY) commits to undertake capacity building and training in child safeguarding with all development partners who work with us to implement programs that involve or affect children.

All media visiting the field will be expected to undergo a child safeguarding briefing prior to their visit to (AGENCY) facilitated programs.

SECTION N – WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Organisations that work with partners have a responsibility to make sure that those partners have robust child safeguarding measures in place, and that their policies and processes are equivalent to the requirements set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct at Commitment 1.4. This means that your agency's Child Safeguarding policy, your Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct, are extended to partners through the inclusion in MoU's, or similar.

It is advisable to include a section on working with partners to demonstrate how your child safeguarding measures reach beyond your office and out into the field. By providing an overview of the measures you have in place when working with partners you will be articulating:

- How your organisation applies child protection standards across all of its operations
- To potential partners the expectations you have regarding child protection
- To potential offenders that your child protection standards are in place at field level
- To children and their communities that you take seriously your responsibility to ensure their protection
- How you apply a risk mitigation approach to your work with partners and to your programs

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) ensures that any implementing partner is a child safe organisation by including partners in the scope of (AGENCY)'s child safeguarding policy and procedures. (AGENCY)'s child safeguarding policy and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct will be included in all partnership agreements and contracts

(AGENCY) determines a partners' status as a child safe organisation by including child safeguarding in our partner appraisal process and commits to strengthening our partners ability to protect children in our programs by investing in targeted capacity building, training and awareness raising on child safeguarding. This includes socialising the expectations extended to partners with regards to implementation of child safeguarding behaviours.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) includes a budget line for capacity building of partners in all program budgets (if deemed necessary by the partner appraisal).

Where a partner does not have their own Child Safeguarding Policy, CoC and procedures in place, (AGENCY) works with them to develop their own documents in line with global /donor/sector minimum standards including the ACFID Code of Conduct

(AGENCY) actively monitors the implementation of agreed child safeguarding measures and external compliance obligations with our partners on an ongoing basis via project reports, project visits and annual audits.

(AGENCY) works with partners to undertake a child protection risk assessment for all programs and activities involving or affecting children, this is monitored throughout the life of the project cycle.

(AGENCY) has an agreed reporting mechanism in place with partners for concerns regarding child abuse or a breach of the CSP.



Don't forget to include the extra child protection measures you have in place with partners for higher risk programs such as residential care, refuges, working in emergency contexts and inclusion

SECTION O – PROGRAMS THAT FACILITATE DIRECT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Programs which facilitate relationships between an adult such as a sponsor, volunteer or visitor and a child or children in a development program can be complex, and potentially pose a child protection risk. Harm to children can be caused intentionally by offenders who target organisations who run such programs or unintentionally by well-meaning supporters who don't understand the boundaries required to keep children safe.

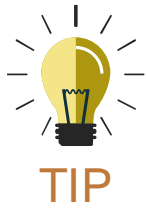
Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that children in such programs are kept safe. Programs such as these provide a level of contact with vulnerable children that would not normally take place. If your organisation implements programs and activities such as child sponsorship, volunteer trips, donor visits etc. that provide direct access to and communication with children, specific and robust child safeguarding guidelines should be in place and an overview of those measures should be highlighted in the CSP.

Following is a list of example statements and measures that could be included in a CSP, however, this is not an exhaustive list and it is recommended that a specific child protection risk assessment of each program should be undertaken to identify the risks to children and the safeguarding measures required to keep them safe.

EXAMPLE:

(AGENCY) recognises the need to implement specific guidelines to manage the child protection risks within its sponsorship/volunteer visit/donor visit programs. These guidelines include ensuring that:

- Letters which contain political or religious comments which could cause offence or be inappropriate are not permitted
- All sponsors/volunteers/donors will receive a child safeguarding briefing that includes clear child protection and behavioural guidelines
- All visits should be arranged in advance through our office and sponsors/volunteers/donors interviewed
- Sponsors/volunteers/donors arrange their visit via (AGENCY) in Australia, giving at least 3 months notice
- Police checks are required for visiting sponsors/volunteers/donors and any accompanying family members
- Volunteers participating in X Program will be required to supply references
- Volunteers participating in X Program will be required to participate in child safeguarding training prior to their visit
- All sponsors/visitors are expected to read and abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy and read, abide and sign the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (ADD and any other additional/specific guidelines developed for such programs)
- Partner agency staff will be present at all times during the visit/program
- Children should not be invited to leave or taken away from their communities
- Invitations to the sponsor's/volunteers/donors country are not permitted
- All gifts and correspondence will be screened by the agency
- The exchange of mailing addresses and contact details (including online forums) is not permitted at any time
- After every visit a report will be sent to the head office
- All visits will be monitored
- Visitors will not be permitted to stay with a child in their home/centre or community overnight
- Where sponsors/visitors/donors go against policies the organisation can bring sponsorship/relationship with (AGENCY) to a close
- Return visits to the child/community/centre without the facilitation of (AGENCY) will be considered a breach of the CSP and CoC and follow up action will be taken by (AGENCY), including reporting to authorities if deemed necessary.



Due to the high risk nature of these programs you should:

- Develop a specific set of behavioural guidelines that refer directly to the nature of the program and the type and level of contact with children. This would be in addition to asking participants to abide by your CSP and sign the CoC.
- Support and build the capacity of partner staff so they are equipped and empowered to identify and manage the specific risks that such programs pose – including managing the behaviours and expectations of visitors in order to ensure the best interests and protection of children.

SECTION P – WORKING IN EMERGENCY CONTEXTS

This section of your CSP should provide an overview of the child safeguarding measures that you have in place if your organisation works in emergency contexts. It is not necessarily an overview of child protection programming, but rather the safe guarding measures you put in place to ensure that you do no harm to children in any of your activities in this context.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) is committed to ensuring the protection of children when we respond to a humanitarian emergency. We have specific safe guarding standards in place that are implemented in all our emergency responses.

All personnel working in emergency contexts for (AGENCY) must wear a photo ID tag that clearly identifies them as a (AGENCY) staff member. Each tag has the name of the staff member, their photograph and is signed by the CEO.

All personnel sent to the field to work in emergency contexts are pre-screened and trained in child protection.

(AGENCY) works with field partners to appoint a trained child protection focal point in all emergency response locations who are responsible for taking and managing complaints and supporting program staff in conducting child protection risk assessments.

(AGENCY) is committed to The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

We have specific procedures in place that guide our communications work on emergency situations that aim to protect the increased vulnerability of children in these settings.



The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action can be found here: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/cpms_2019_web_en.pdf/

SECTION Q – RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

This section of your CSP should provide a detailed procedure for the reporting and management of child abuse concerns. There should be a child abuse reporting procedure which deals with reports of abuse in Australia as well as for the countries where your development programs are implemented.

A very clear reporting procedure is required to ensure that staff and associates are aware of their legal and moral responsibilities to report suspected child abuse within and outside of the organisation.

A fair, confidential and transparent reporting process will inspire confidence in staff and others to raise child abuse concerns about a child, a carer or a staff member. The clearer the process, the more likely that people will speak up.

The reporting procedure should include:

- What to report
- When to report
- Who to report to
- How to report
- What will happen next?



Some states in Australia have legislated child protection /child safe standards and mandatory requirements for reporting child abuse. Be sure to research these and make sure that your CSP and child safeguarding complaints handling procedures are aligned with them as relevant to the location of your organisation. The Code requires your reporting process to be consistent with relevant legislation, including compliance with mandatory reporting responsibilities.



EXAMPLE:

(AGENCY) considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. We will take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and act on these reports immediately. (AGENCY) is committed to a reporting process which is truthful, fair and professional.

It is mandatory for all (AGENCY) personnel and associates to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of child exploitation or abuse or any breach of the CSP and / or COC.

These concerns may relate to a child or a staff member involved in the organisation or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organisation's programs. If you do have a concern you should immediately follow (AGENCY)'s child abuse reporting procedures.

Who should report?

All (AGENCY) staff and associates including people in the community and partner organisations.

What should be reported?

Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, staff or associate regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of a child (this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm to a child)

Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by an (AGENCY) staff, volunteer or other associate that breaches the (AGENCY) Code of Conduct for Working with Children.

When to report?

Child abuse concerns should be raised immediately.

Who to report to?

- Overseas: Child abuse reports should be made to the line manager or Country Director. If this is not possible reports can be made directly to the Australian based Child Protection Officer (CPO)
- In Australia: Child abuse reports should be made to the CPO or the CEO.



IMPORTANT

Make sure to include the name and contact details of each of these people so they can be contacted quickly and directly. This is especially important if the people reporting are from outside the organisation. There should be two people/contact points listed.

You might like to consider also including the contact details for the organisation's reception as they may be able to connect you through if you cannot make contact using the numbers provided.

How should it be reported?

Verbally and by completing the (AGENCY) child abuse incident reporting sheet (ADD LINK)

What will happen next?

The CEO and/or Country Director in consultation the CPO will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step. This will involve one or more of the following:

- Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision about the allegation;
 - Reporting to local police and or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear
 - that a crime has been committed;
 - Reporting to the Australian Federal Police when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed regarding child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography
 - Reporting to local child protection services as necessary
 - Handling the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter
 - No further action taken
 - Providing support to all stakeholders (including reporter) as necessary
-

Confidentiality (as opposed to secrecy).

Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing child protection concerns. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with the designated Manager or CPO. The names of people involved and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by Australian or overseas law or when a report to police or child protection authorities is made.

Disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any personnel or associate found to:

- Have failed to report a child protection concern
- Have intentionally made a false allegation
- Have made a serious breach of the CPP and/or COC (minor breaches may result in action such as refresher training or increased supervision)

Disciplinary action may include the following sanctions:

- (AGENCY) personnel – disciplinary action / dismissal
 - (AGENCY) associates – up to and including termination of all relations including contractual and partnership agreements with (AGENCY)
 - Where relevant – reporting to authorities
-

Responding to disclosure by a child.

The Code requires ACFID members to have a child-friendly complaints handling process.

When a child/young person tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously

It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

When a child or young person's discloses they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- Listening carefully
- Telling the child/young person you believe him or her
- Telling the child/young person it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
- Telling the child/young person you are pleased he/she told you.

You will not be helping the child/young person if you:

- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
- Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved.

General statements.

(AGENCY) will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.

All reports made in good faith will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the child regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. (AGENCY) will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting child abuse in good faith are protected.

The rights and welfare of the child is of prime importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout the investigation.

Children and community members with whom (AGENCY) works will be provided with information about how to report any child protection concerns about (AGENCY) staff members and associates.

Child protection reporting focal points:

The Code requires members to appoint a child protection incident reporting focal person. This is normally established as part of the child protection reporting procedure. Some larger INGOs have appointed Child Protection Officer's (CPO's) who act as child abuse reporting focal points at a national and international level. CPO's can also be responsible for monitoring the CSP and providing advice and education to the organisation on child protection matters. While a specialised CPO role may not be appropriate or possible in all

organisations, particularly smaller ones, it is essential that the organisation clearly identifies who concerns of child abuse should be reported to e.g. line managers, program manager, HR manager or CEO. This person should have sufficient training and support to carry out the role. It is important to have more than one point of contact in case the person concerned is also the line manager.



- To make your reporting procedure as clear as possible consider also presenting it in a flowchart.
- So that you can respond to children's protection needs effectively and quickly it is good practice to undertake a mapping of local child protection legislation, support services and authorities. As part of this mapping, analyse the effectiveness and safety of the services and determine who would be best to seek support from /refer children to safely.

Information to include in your Child Protection Complaints Handling Procedures

In order to effectively follow up a child protection report or concern, it is extremely important to develop a set of clear, fair and safe procedures to guide you through the complaints handling process. This will help you to manage the report professionally and in a way that respects the best interests and legal rights of all stakeholders.

Your complaints handling procedures should clearly outline/include the following:

- The steps to be taken during an administrative/internal investigation
- Roles and responsibilities
- Contact details for authorities, formal and non-formal child protection and support services (where they exist) to report and refer to
- Information on local child protection legislation and the organisations legal obligations
- A list of what behaviours constitutes a breach of the CSP or CoC or a criminal offence to help guide and inform your decision making
- Reporting/interview/ investigation plan templates – for accurate records
- Consideration should be given to the following in all cases:
 - Best interests of the child
 - Safety of all stakeholders
 - Confidentiality- only passing information on a need to know basis or as required by law
 - Using skilled personnel to handle complaints (preferably someone who is trained in handling complaints and who can be impartial and fair)
- Establishing clear aims and objectives for your investigation/management of the report

- Recording and safely storing accurate documentation
- Factors that can influence the implementation or outcomes of your investigation/management of the report such as relationship with the alleged perpetrator, gender, culture, effectiveness of partner procedures etc.

Reporting child abuse to authorities in Australia

The sexual and physical abuse of children in all Australian states and territories is a crime. The age of consent in most Australian states and territories is 16. However, it is important to check in each jurisdiction as the age limit is different in some states. Additionally, in some jurisdictions it is a criminal offence for persons who are in positions of power and trust (e.g. teacher, parent, carer) to engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18.

Reporting child abuse can either be made to the local state police or the state child protection authorities. If there is an allegation or suspicion of child sexual abuse by a staff member or volunteer in the organisation, these matters should be reported to the state police. In most Australian states there are specialised units dealing with child sexual crimes. If there are concerns that a child is being sexually abused by someone external to the organisation, the state police and/or child protection authorities should be contacted.

Concerns about the welfare of the child in relation to neglect and/or emotional abuse should be reported to the child protection authorities in each state or territory.

Concerns about people engaging in child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography should be reported to the Australian Federal Police (Transnational Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Team).

Contact details for these authorities should be provided in the procedures and updated as necessary.

Reporting child abuse allegations overseas

Managing child abuse allegations can be very challenging when allegations or reports of child abuse have been made in overseas programs and communities. Organisations may be faced with complex legal decisions on how they should respond to allegations of child abuse in situations where child protection laws are unclear and where law-enforcement is inadequate. Organisations may also face situations in some countries where reporting child abuse to authorities may result in a child or staff member facing serious human rights violations.

Strategies should be put in place to manage the following difficult and complex issues which may emerge when responding to child abuse concerns in overseas programs:

- the treatment that the child will receive by local authorities e.g. will the child be victimised, criminalised, forced to undergo medical checks etc
- long term support for child and family - who, how etc
- whether the child will be ostracised by its family and or community as a result of reporting the abuse;
- how the local authorities will treat the alleged perpetrator e.g. torture, death penalty, corrupt justice systems
- impact on your staff and organisational reputation

Any of the above considerations should not be used as reasons to avoid reporting child abuse in countries where child sexual abuse/ exploitation/ physical are crimes. Child abuse is a violation of children's rights and organisations have a moral and often legal responsibility to take action.

Any allegation considered to be a criminal offence should be reported to the local police and/or child protection authorities.

Concerns about Australian nationals engaging in child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography should be reported to the Australian Federal Police (Transnational Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Team).

Contact details for these authorities should be provided in yours and/or partner procedures and updated as necessary.



IMPORTANT

The best interests of the child must always be prioritised in the decisions you make and in the actions that you take. When reporting to authorities, additional support for the child may be necessary to ensure their safety and rights (such as linking them with local community based child protection groups, local women's organisations and/or formal social services).



TIP

Remember and include the reporting obligations you have in any contracts with donors in your reporting procedures.



Remember, you are only investigating the report made in order to determine the nature of the allegation. Leave it to the authorities to undertake an investigation as soon as you suspect or it becomes clear that a criminal offence has taken place.

Managing child protection reports can be very challenging and if handled incorrectly, can have negative effects on stakeholder's personal safety, reputation and wellbeing. If you feel that you do not have the necessary resources in your organisation it is recommended that you partner with or employ the services of a specialist agency to assist you.

SECTION R – INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A child safe organisation works with children and young people, engaging them in activities that provide opportunities for their voices and opinions to be heard by providing child friendly mechanisms for children to raise concerns, to give feedback on and input into services, systems and programs and to develop their own standards (such as a child friendly CoC). In addition, a child safe organisation informs children, their parents, care-givers and communities about the organisations roles and responsibilities and duty of care for keeping children safe, the CSP, COC, reporting and support mechanisms and their rights to access and utilise them.

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) is committed to child and youth participation. We will do this by providing opportunities for children's views to be heard and incorporate their views into our policies and programs. Children will be asked for their feedback about staff and services. They will be consulted in the development and review of the CPP and will be asked to contribute to the child safe code of conduct in regard to what they consider to be appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Children will also be informed about the (AGENCY) child abuse reporting process and who to contact if they are at risk, have been abused or are concerned about another child.

(AGENCY) recognises the unique insight, experiences and contribution of children and young people and works with them to help identify any potential child protection risks in all programs that include or affect children and young people. These risks are included in the risk management strategy and monitored throughout the program cycle.

(AGENCY) has specific and comprehensive procedures in place for all events and activities (such as agency to add type of event/activity e.g. residential event, advocacy campaign event, youth media club, children's parliament event) that involve children and young people. These procedures include safety factors such as adult/child ratio's, parental consent, medical needs, safety checks of event locations, allocation of first aid and child protection focal points, safety briefings, reporting, child safe recruitment and training of personnel etc. These procedures are available here (ADD LINK)

EXAMPLES:

(AGENCY) works with children and their communities to raise awareness and commitment to children's rights by (ADD RELEVANT CONTENT EXPLAINING HOW)

SECTION 5 – POLICY REVIEW AND AUDIT

It is very important that your policy is a relevant and current document. It is also extremely important to know how effective your policy implementation is. Therefore, your CSP should be reviewed by relevant personnel and associates on a regular basis and signed off by agency Management and Board Directors. Your organisation should also undertake an annual review of how the CPP is being implemented by personnel and associates. This will help you to understand how effective it is, whether the standards set out in the CSP are being complied with whether there are any gaps in your safeguarding processes that require you to make any changes to the CSP or supporting procedures and processes.

The recommend period of review is 2-3 years, with a maximum of 5 years between policy reviews.

EXAMPLE:

(AGENCY)'s Child Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed every two years. The CPO will manage the review of the CSP and personnel, children and young people as well as other stakeholders will be consulted in this process. Any change made to the Policy will be signed off by (AGENCY) management and the Board.

(AGENCY) undertakes an annual self-audit of CSP implementation in order to review adherence to our child safeguarding standards.



LINKS AND ANNEXURES



USEFUL LINKS

ACFID Code of Conduct:

<https://acfid.asn.au/good-practice-toolkit/quality-principle-1-rights-justice-and-safeguarding/commitment-1-4/>

ACFID Online Resources:

[https://acfid.asn.au/resources?region=All&type=All&date_start\[value\]=&date_end\[value\]=&title_op=allwords&title=&everything_op=allwords&everything=child%20protection&keyword=All&sort_by=created&sort_order=DESC](https://acfid.asn.au/resources?region=All&type=All&date_start[value]=&date_end[value]=&title_op=allwords&title=&everything_op=allwords&everything=child%20protection&keyword=All&sort_by=created&sort_order=DESC)

DFAT Child Protection Policy: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/child-protection-policy.pdf>

Keeping Children Safe: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/child-safeguarding-self-assessment/>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

Child friendly version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

<http://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>

The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/cpms_2019_web_en.pdf/

Australian Institute of Family Studies CFCA Resource Sheet – Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect – August 2023: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Australian Institute of Family Studies CFCA Resource Sheet Pre-employment screening: Working With Children Checks and Police Checks- January 2024:

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks>

Victorian Child Safe Standards: <https://www.vic.gov.au/about-child-safe-standards>

Child Wellbeing and Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines:

<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/service-providers/deliver-services-to-children-and-families/nsw-interagency-guidelines-for-practitioners.html>

Process for mandated reporters, Government of South Australia :

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/report-suspected-harm/process-for-mandated-reporters/the-role-of-mandated-reporters>

ANNEXURE 1 — CONDUCTING A CHILD PROTECTION RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment which examines the risk to children in all programs and activities is a vital and important step in the development of the CSP. The risk assessment process involves mapping out the type of contact the organisation has with children, what child protection measures are already in place and identifying where there are gaps and actual or potential risks to children and then identifying how these will be managed. Strategies should then be developed to reduce or remove these risks and can inform how you develop both your CSP and your child protection procedures.

It is critical that specific guidelines are developed to manage high risk activities. For example, running a sponsorship or field volunteer program can be considered a high-risk activity. Specific guidelines need to be developed for these programs that address the risks of sponsors/visitors contacting and/gaining access to children through the program. Additionally, organisations that work in disaster and emergency situations are working in extremely high-risk environments where children are more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and trafficking. Specific child protection disaster and emergency guidelines should be developed to manage these risks.

When conducting an organisational child protection risk assessment it is valuable to include personnel and relevant associates (such as volunteers and board members) from different departments/functions of the organisation who will be able to help you identify the possible risks in the work that they do.

A risk log, similar to the following can be used to document child protection risks and mitigation measures:

Department /Function	Activity	Risk to children/ young people	What is already in place?	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Ranking	Action to reduce risk	By whom	By when
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A risk ranking table can be used to assess the level of risk:

		Impact		
		L	M	H
Likelihood	H	M	H	H
	M	L	M	H
	L	L	L	M

THE QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK TO IDENTIFY RISKS IN EACH AREA ARE:

- In which activities do we have contact with children or access to their personal information or images?
- What are the practical details of the activity/ program? (what, where, when, who etc)
- What level of contact with or involvement of children and young people is there? (RISK)
- How does your work impact on children?
- What are the potential risks to children in this activity/program? What could go wrong? (RISK)
- Which measures/strategies are already in place that safe guard children and young people in this activity/program? (LIKELIHOOD & IMPACT)
- What is the likelihood of something going wrong/ a child or young person being harmed? (LIKELIHOOD)
- What would the consequences for the child/young person be? (IMPACT)
- How would we rank that risk? High, Medium or Low?

Think about:

- Your organisational culture
- The nature of your activities
- Your work with partners
- How associates are involved in your activities
- Your ICT systems and online activity
- Your marketing, communications and fundraising activities
- Your recruitment processes of all stakeholders

HIGH RISK FACTORS CAN INCLUDE:

Work with children who are:

- Very young
- Have been abandoned, orphaned
- Living with disabilities
- Already victims of abuse and exploitation
- Living without a carer
- Displaced

Staff and associates (volunteers, consultants, Board etc) who:

- Have not been screened carefully e.g. Through interviews, police checks and reference checks
- Have not been trained in child protection (CPP, CoC, reporting etc)
- Were recruited quickly for immediate deployment e.g. In emergency situations
- Are not supervised adequately
- Are not trained in positive discipline strategies

Locations which are:

- Isolated
- Disaster areas
- Overcrowded
- Refugee camps
- In war or other civil unrest
- Secluded or inaccessible
- Home-based

Activities which involve:

- One-to-one contact
- Physical contact
- Personal hygiene tasks
- Swimming, bathing, changing
- Staffing by volunteers
- Overnight stays
- Online interaction
- Children of different ages
- Children challenging social, cultural norms (think about gender, role of children, taboo issues)

- Visiting children's communities and homes
- Children attending events

Supervision which:

- Is non-existent or informal, such as where visitors can attend a field program unsupervised
- Involves staff working alone

Organisational systems and process:

- No CP focal point appointed to receive complaints
- No monitoring of child protection implementation in place
- No management buy-in for CPP implementation
- No systems to safeguard children's personal information, images
- CP not included in organisational risk registers

Local risk factors also need to be considered, particularly in vulnerable communities and locations. High risks to children include: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour limited understanding or child rights, harmful traditional practices etc. Awareness of local risks and issues affecting children will enhance the risk assessment process and guide child protection strategies.

TO MANAGE THESE RISKS THE ORGANISATION WILL NEED TO:

- Identify ways of reducing these risks (ACTION)
- Have procedures in place that personnel and relevant associates are aware of in order to reduce identified risks
- Have complaints handling procedures in place for when things go wrong
- Establish monitoring systems that monitor both the implementation of mitigation measures but also any identify new risks

Child protection risk management and monitoring should become an ongoing activity in the organisation, and be part of the planning, implementation and monitoring of all activities/programs.

The questions that should be asked are:

- Do the risks still exist?
- Have they been reduced, controlled, managed by the existing strategies?
- Are there any new risks?
- What strategies/resources are needed to implement to reduce, remove, control these emerging risks?

ANNEXURE 2 — MINIMUM STANDARDS OF CHILD SAFE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Minimum standards of child safe recruitment practices include:

- Use of an application form which requests extensive information about the applicant's educational and professional background. It is important to examine background information carefully to identify patterns or unexplained gaps in their employment history.
- Ensure that the organisation's stance on child protection is well promoted in materials sent to applicants. This will help applicants self-assess and deter persons who may not share your values on child protection.
- All positions whether paid, voluntary or contract should have a position description which outlines the specific duties and accountabilities of the position. This clarifies boundaries and this clarity assists in the management of staff.
- Face-to-face employment interviews are recommended. A mixed gender panel provides a good balance of views. Consider including a young person on the interview panel if you are working directly with children and young people, as they can bring a different perspective.
- Use behavioural-based questions in the interview to explore the person's past experiences. Past behaviour is the best predictor for future actions.
- Referee checks should be conducted on all preferred candidates. All referees should be contacted directly. It is important to verify the identity of the referee and clarify the relationship between the candidate and the referee. Ask referees targeted child protection questions that help you to assess an applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Police clearances must be conducted for all staff and all others involved with the organisation. People with a criminal history of child abuse, violence to adults or children and internet offences involving children would pose an unacceptably high risk to children in your programs and potentially in the communities in which you work. Where reliable police checks are not available use a statutory declaration (criminal declaration form).
- Screening is an ongoing process and should continue throughout the orientation process and the probationary period.
- Include child protection as key performance indicators that are discussed during performance reviews.