

Child safeguarding policy and code of conduct

Compliance with this policy and code of conduct is mandatory.

The SCI Child Safeguarding Protocol 2010 describes the policies and procedures that SCI and each Save the Children Member is required to apply and monitor to ensure that any children with whom we come into contact are respected and protected from abuse and sexual exploitation of any sort.

As a Member, the Save the Children Australia (SCA) child safeguarding policy and guidelines align with the SCI Child Safeguarding Protocol requirements.

POLICY STATEMENT

Children who come into contact with SCA as a result of our activities must be safeguarded to the maximum possible extent from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk of child abuse, sexual exploitation, injury and any other harm.

This responsibility falls upon all SCA employees and representatives and is reflected across many policies. This duty of care is enshrined in this child safeguarding policy and code of conduct

This policy requires:

- SCA to recruit only employees and representatives who are suited to work with children and to apply strict child safe recruitment practices. Child safe recruitment and screening requirements apply to all employees and representatives. This includes a national criminal record check, Working with Children Check (where this check exists in representative's jurisdiction), child safe interview questions and verbal reference checks.
- Employees and representatives to be aware of their obligations and respond appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children.
- Employees and representatives to behave appropriately towards children and never abuse the position of trust that comes with being a member of the Save the Children family.
- Employees and representatives to actively create a safe environment for children who come into contact with SCA.
- All activities and programs of work, including during the response to humanitarian emergencies, to be assessed for risks to children which are then reduced or removed by all means within our control.
- SCA offices to establish and maintain systems which promote awareness of child safeguarding, enable the prevention of harm, and facilitate the reporting of and responding to safeguarding concerns.

In this way, we make Save the Children *safe* for children and by creating a child safe organisation; we honour their rights and our aspirations.

PRINCIPLES

The child safeguarding policy is committed to and guided by the principles of:

- Personal responsibility. All employees and representatives must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote the policy and code of conduct. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential breaches of the policy or code of conduct.

- **Universality.** The policy includes mandatory requirements that apply to everyone in all aspects of SCA’s work regardless of how and where they work, including during the response to humanitarian emergencies.
- **Standards based approach.** SCA has adopted a standards-based approach to child safeguarding. Our safeguarding standards and expected standards of behaviour are often higher than those of the national laws and community custom or tradition. Nevertheless, it is our standards that employees and representatives agree to when they join SCA and it is to these that they will be held account.
- **Openness.** We aim to create an environment in relation to child safeguarding issues where any issues or concerns can be raised and discussed.
- **Transparency and accountability.** This is essential to ensure that poor practice can be addressed, potentially abusive behaviour can be challenged, and best practice promoted.
- **Accountability to children and their communities.** Through strengthening our internal systems, standards and practice we will be more accountable to the people we aim to serve.
- **Child participation and non-discrimination.** Children should be empowered to understand their rights in this area, and made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem or a concern.
- **The best interest of any children involved.** When dealing with a child safeguarding concern, the best interest of the child will be our priority and we will strive to ensure their safety, health and well-being including meeting their emotional, psychological and physical needs.
- **Confidentiality.** All child safeguarding concerns/reports/ investigations will be dealt with on a need-to-know basis and all records will be held securely. Communication will be confidential and secure.
- **Timeliness.** Given the potential for increased or repeated abuse, timely responses are essential and the accompanying procedures establish mandatory time limits on reporting and responding to concerns.
- **Compliance.** This policy will be implemented in adherence with the Child Safeguarding Protocol of the Save the Children Association and Save the Children International 2010, the U.N.C.R.C.1989; The Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2003, and with due consideration to the local legal frameworks.
- **National Compliance.** This policy will be implemented in adherence with the DFAT Child Protection Policy, ACFID Code of Conduct and all national child safe/protection laws and frameworks.
- **Uniformity.** This policy applies both during, after, and in between work hours.
- **Ambition.** SCA aims to demonstrate that it is a leader in the field of safeguarding children.
- **Partnership.** We will work together with other agencies to promote child safeguarding within organisations and child protection within the wider community.

DEFINITIONS

Word/term	Definition
Child	Anyone under the age of 18 years ¹
Child safeguarding	Within Save the Children, the term refers to the set of policies, procedures and practice that we employ to ensure that Save the Children itself is a child safe organisation.

¹ U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

Word/term	Definition
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.</p> <p>The main categories of abuse are defined by WHO as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, sexual abuse, and exploitation.</p> <p>Physical abuse involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g. hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).</p> <p>Emotional or psychological abuse includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation</p> <p>Sexual abuse includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child, and showing children pornographic material.</p>
Sexual exploitation	<p>Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. ²</p>
Sexual exploitation of a child	<p>The sexual exploitation of a child who is under the age of consent, is child sexual abuse and a criminal offence. An underage child cannot legally give informed consent to sexual activity.</p> <p>Save the Children considers that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual activity with a child with or without their consent is child abuse and a crime e.g. rape, indecent assault. Any sexual activity with a child who is under the legal age of consent of the country in which she/he lives and/or in which the offence occurs regardless of whether they consent is child abuse and a crime. Consensual sexual activity with a child over the legal age of consent of the country in which she/he lives and/or in which the offence occurs, but below 18 years (although not a crime) will be dealt with as a breach of this Child Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct.
The scope of this policy	<p>This Policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCA permanent, maximum term and casual staff, trustees and board members, volunteers, interns, work experience/placement students and individual contractors and consultants; otherwise referred to as employees and representatives. Save the Children International staff, whether national, international, full time, part time or engaged on short-term contracts, e.g. consultants, researchers etc.

² Secretary General's Bulletin Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse 2003 ST/SGB/2003/13

Word/term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of SCI, Save the Children members and other representatives (other representatives). • Employees and representatives of partner agencies (including consortium partners) and any other individuals, groups or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship with SCA that involves any contact with children (unless it is formally agreed that a partner organisation may enforce its own safeguarding or protection policy), referred to as “partners or staff of partner agencies”. • Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit SCA programs or offices in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting our programs or offices. (During this time they are referred to as “representatives”). • All of the above must act in accordance with this policy in both their professional and their personal lives.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a representative of Save the Children I agree to demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children both in my professional and private life.

I will:

Awareness

- Treat all children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children and young people
- Promote the cultural safety of all children and the safety of children with a disability
- Comply with and observe the laws, customs and traditions of countries I work in or visit. In cases where the laws, customs or traditions contravene the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the UNCRC shall be upheld
- Promote the participation and voice of children and young people

Prevention

- Encourage children, young people, parents/guardians, community members, partner organisation personnel, personnel, associates and representatives of SCA to speak up when they feel unsafe or have concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person
- Not use language that is offensive, discriminatory, demeaning, shaming, culturally inappropriate, abusive or of a sexual nature when speaking with or in the presence of a child or young person
- Not engage in behaviour to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child or young person or otherwise emotionally or psychologically abuse a child or young person including exposing them to family violence
- Not use physical or humiliating punishment on children or young people

- Not engage in sexual activity, or act in a sexually provocative manner with children, including paying for sexual services or acts, regardless the age of majority or age of consent locally (mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense)
- Not physically abuse a child or young person
- Ensure that, whenever possible, another adult is present when I am working with children or in contact with children involved in SCA programs or activities SCA Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or young people or access child exploitation materials through any medium
- Ensure children/young people involved in research or consultation for SCA participate in these activities voluntarily, are well informed of the process and have provided consent
- Not use social media to contact, access, solicit or befriend a child or young person involved in SCA programs or activities and not place images of those children or young people on personal social media sites
- Not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or young person in an abusive, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way
- Not condone or participate in behaviour with children or young people which is illegal or abusive
- Not spend time with children or young people involved in SCA programs and activities outside work hours unless I live and work in the same community and come together with those children and young people in the context of my family, social and community life. If this is the situation, I will continue to be a positive role model and mentor for those children and young people and not discuss private/confidential information concerning them outside work hours.
- Not discriminate against or act in favour of particular children or young people involved in SCA programs or activities to the exclusion of others
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Not do things for children involved in SCA programs or activities of a personal nature that they can do for themselves such as toileting or changing their clothes
- Not sleep in close proximity to children or young people involved in SCA programs or activities unless it is absolutely necessary and in which case I will keep my Manager informed and ensure another adult is present, where possible (noting this does not apply to my own children)
- After associating with SCA not marry a person under the age of 18 years

Responding

- Speak with my Manager about any concerns I have of my involvement in any situation where my words, actions or behaviour may be misinterpreted
- Speak with my Manager if I am involved in any situation which would be likely to have a negative impact on the reputation of SCA
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence which occurred before or occurs during my employment/engagement with SCA that relates to child exploitation and abuse SCA Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Reporting

- Immediately report concerns or allegations for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, or breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct in accordance with Child Safeguarding Reporting Process

Use of children's images:

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes I must:

- Assess and endeavor to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and documented consent from the parent/guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or 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
- Ensure 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
- Ensure a child/young person is not subject to a legal order (i.e. Family Court, domestic violence order, child protection or criminal order) where the safety of the child/young person or parent/guardian may be at risk or the privacy of the child/young person is compromised, if the identity and location of the child/young person is revealed

Prior Version	Current version	Comments	Author	Approved by Executive Committee	Approved by BPRC	Review date
	1.0	New Policy replacing child protection policy and adopting SCI Child safeguarding policy	Fiona Williams	3.11.2016	23.11.2016	Q4 2018
1.0	2.0	Further non material changes to Policy approved by BPRC 23/11/16. Policy format revision and the merger of Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct into one policy.	Peter Watts	3/11/2016	23/11/2016	Q4 2018

STATEMENT TO BE SIGNED BY ALL SCA EMPLOYEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand SCA's:

- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding Reporting Process.

I agree to comply with the Policy, Code of Conduct and Reporting Process. I understand that a breach of the Policy, Code or Reporting Process may provide grounds for my employment/engagement with SCA to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of the Policy or Code could result in criminal prosecution.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person employed/engaged by SCA, to use common sense and avoid actions that are abusive or exploitative of children and young people, or could be construed as such.

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

I confirm my willingness to participate in SCA training sessions on child safeguarding.

Name _____

Position _____

Signed _____

Date _____