



## Child Protection Policy

### Purpose

WFAV is aware that its work may pose a risk to children and has developed this policy to mitigate those risks. The protection of children is the responsibility of the WFAV team. WFAV is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. WFAV supports the rights of children and will operate in such a way that we create a safe environment for children.

This policy aims to educate our staff, volunteers, and others about child abuse, and promote a culture where everyone works together to create a safe environment for children.

### Scope

This policy applies to all WFAV activities within Australia and Ethiopia. It forms part of the WFAV governance framework and applies to the WFAV Team. This policy adheres to relevant ACFID and DFAT clauses identified in the WFAV compliance matrix.

The WFAV Team are all responsible for maintaining a professional role with children which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstanding or a violation of the professional relationship. WFAV has developed this Child Protection Policy to protect children, staff, volunteers and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations.

### Policy

In line with the Child Protection Policy intent, WFAV is committed to a Child Protection Code of Conduct:

- WFAV is committed to protecting all children so all measures to protect children are applicable in any situation
- the WFAV Team may only take photographs/footage of children in accordance with the requirements detailed in this document and the Communications Policy
- the WFAV Team are to demonstrate exceptional standards of behaviours towards all children at all times
- the WFAV Team take appropriate action regarding any actions observed that are not respectful of children - whether or not on a WFAV site
- the support crew are educated about the WFAV Child Protection Policy and their selection and continued employment is dependent on their support of the policy and the respect they show towards children
- contracts include the requirement that all contractors respect children and that they are not to employ children on the site
- contractor induction includes orientation to the Child Protection Policy which is translated into the local language by the In-Country Manager in front of village representatives
- any non-compliance by the WFAV Team (including support crew or contractor) results in disciplinary action as per the policy
- WFAV considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. All concerns and reports of child abuse will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately.



## Procedures

### Recruitment of Personnel

WFAV is committed to child-safe recruitment, selection and screening. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to be involved in our programs. Our child-safe practices include:

- Promoting our child-safe commitment on our website and in job advertisements
- All WFAV positions will be assessed for the level of risk in relation to potential contact with children.
- All applicants are required to submit an application form when applying for a position along with their:
  - CV / Resume
  - job history
  - names of three referees
- Face-to-face interviews will be conducted for all positions unless in extreme circumstances such as a global pandemic, virtual interviews will be acceptable.
- Behavioural-based questions will be asked for examples of the candidate's past behaviour and experiences.
- Conducting background checks on WFAV staff and volunteers via police checks, working with children checks and referee reports.
- All personnel are required to provide photographic proof of identity eg driver's licence, passport, birth certificate
- All WFAV personnel are required to read, sign and abide by WFAV's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
- WFAV reserves the right to refuse employment of staff/volunteers or terminate their employment if they pose a risk to children in line with the Human Resources Policy.

### Communication and Use of Children's Images

WFAV adheres to DFAT's Child Protection Professional Behaviours <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/Pages/child-protection>

when photographing or filming children. Using these guidelines we ensure that:

- photographers will be screened for their suitability, including police checks and working with children checks
- local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- we obtain and document informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable, isolated or submissive manner. Children are adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive images are honest representations of the context and the facts whilst avoiding undignified, culturally, socially or spiritually sensitive imagery
- 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.



### Reporting child abuse

All WFAV Team members must immediately report witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse or any breach of the Child Protection Policy and/or Code of conduct:

- in Australia – reports are to be made immediately to the CEO or Board President
- in Ethiopia - reports are to be made immediately to the CEO or the In-Country who will relay the message in writing to the CEO

### Responding to reports

WFAV will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties are treated fairly. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently. The rights and welfare of children are of prime importance and every effort will be made to protect those rights and safety throughout the investigation.

The person who receives the report will discuss the allegations in consultation with the CEO and decide on an appropriate course of action that may involve one or more of the following:

- reporting the issue to the local police or child protection authority
- reporting the incident to the Australian Federal Police when it is suspected that a crime has been committed regarding child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography
- reporting the incident to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading in line with their guidelines
- reporting the incident to local child protection services
- providing support to stakeholders as necessary
- consulting and/or informing the Board

Detailed written notes must be created and maintained. All reports will be managed in the strictest confidence. 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 WFAV personnel found to have:

- failed to report a child protection concern
- intentionally made a false allegation
- breached the Child Protection Policy and/or Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary action may include:

- dismissal
- reporting the incident to the relevant authority/ies.

Additionally, disciplinary processes outlined in the Human Resources Policy may be implemented.

### Definitions

**Child or young person** – any person under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** – happens to children of all ages, gender, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes **physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, exploitation**, bullying, child labour and family violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by any person, including by young people themselves and in some cases professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust.



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*Child protection* – the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

*Emotional abuse* – occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, controlled 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.

*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.

*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.

*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.

*Sexual abuse* – occurs when a child or young person is used by another child, adolescent or adult for their own sexual stimulation or gratification regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or noncontact acts including sexualized 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.