

Safeguarding and Protection Policy (Including Child Protection)

Functional Area: Protection and Safeguarding

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Board Resolution: UWB20230323-3

1 Context

As an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia, UnitingWorld affirms the belief that “all people, including children, are made in the image of God. As a Christian community we believe God reaches out to us in love and acceptance, and our relationships with each other should express love, care and respect. Central to living out the gospel is to love God and to love others. As a community of faith, we are committed to providing safe environments for all people, including children, so they may live life in all its fullness.”¹

This policy is part of a suite of policies that set out how UnitingWorld lives out these values to do no harm and promote the safety and wellbeing of all people, with special concern for children and other vulnerable groups. These policies, included in Related Resources below and available on the UnitingWorld website, form an interlocking web of support to drive professional and compassionate behaviour and survivor-centred response to reports and allegations of misconduct.

This policy reflects the priority of the broader international development and humanitarian sectors to upholding human rights and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable groups. Protection from abuse and exploitation within the context of humanitarian activities has been of particular concern since the early 2000s. International efforts have heightened since 2018 in response to widely publicised failures in conduct by staff and leaders of UN agencies and INGOs and increased recognition of power imbalances within development and humanitarian efforts.

As a signatory to their Codes of Conduct, UnitingWorld supports the ACT Alliance and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and their members in efforts to promote safeguarding and protection efforts in the development and humanitarian spheres. As an NGO accredited to receive Australian Aid funding, UnitingWorld supports and adheres to the Australian Government’s Child Protection and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies.

2 Scope

This policy sets out the measures UnitingWorld will take to minimise the risk of harm to people, including children, and how we will respond when harm does take place. It applies to our activities in Australia and internationally.

This policy primarily focuses on **safeguarding**: how we and our partners assess, prevent, and respond to all forms of child exploitation and abuse, and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in the context of our operations and joint programs – including through the abuse of power by UnitingWorld Representatives. The policy also articulates how we work with partners and their communities on broader **protection** issues by assessing and responding to and/or reducing the risk of other forms of harm occurring in their contexts, including harm to children. Safeguarding and protection are closely related, especially in terms of underlying causes and how risks are assessed and addressed and are here included in the same policy.

¹ National Safe Church Unit, *National Child Safe Policy Framework*, Uniting Church in Australia, 2019, p. 5

This policy applies to all UnitingWorld Representatives, defined as any personnel funded by or undertaking tasks on behalf of UnitingWorld, as per the Governance Framework. The people this policy seeks to protect from harm includes participants of activities we fund, members of the wider community where projects take place, and UnitingWorld Representatives.

Harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying of staff by staff is covered by our Professional Conduct Policy, which also includes expected and unacceptable behaviours relating to protecting the safety and well-being of children and preventing SEAH. Sanctions applied in the event of a UnitingWorld Representative breaching the Code of Conduct are included in the Professional Conduct Policy, including dismissal and criminal prosecution, in accordance with relevant legislation.

UnitingWorld will not knowingly engage anyone who poses a risk to children. Our Human Resources Policy and related procedures outline screening processes, including obtaining Criminal Record and verbal reference checks.

UnitingWorld treats safeguarding reports as incidents, the handling of which are included in Complaints and Incident Handling Policy and related procedures. Relevant aspects are summarised in this policy for ease of reference.

3 Policy Commitments

Principle 1: We will uphold human rights and promote the dignity and wellbeing of all people we encounter

All people, including children, have equal rights to protection from all forms of discrimination, violence, coercion, exploitation, and abuse, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, poverty, or socio-economic status. UnitingWorld will take a theological approach to working with partners to progress human rights in line with our shared identities as church entities.

Principle 2: We will do no harm

We take our duty of care seriously and will strive to provide a safe environment for all people, including children, in our operations and programs. We will systematically manage risks to ensure our Representatives do not abuse their power and that our projects and activities do not expose anyone to harm. We will incorporate safeguarding as an essential component in all stages of project cycle management.

Principle 3: We will seek to understand and respond to the underlying causes of harm including power imbalance and gender inequality

Child and sexual abuse and exploitation, including within humanitarian and development contexts, is an abuse of power. Power imbalance is rooted in oppressive systems including patriarchy and racism, and the power held by donors and aid workers. UnitingWorld will strive to be sensitive to context, mindful of power imbalance and recognise difference, embracing diversity. Internally and with partners we will seek to address attitudes that permit or excuse harm.

Principle 4: We will share responsibility for safeguarding

All representatives of UnitingWorld, regardless of their role, are involved in creating and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, dignified and safe environment for those we encounter, including children. UnitingWorld's Board, management and staff will have clear safeguarding responsibilities. UnitingWorld will support all Representatives, including partner personnel and contractors, to understand their responsibilities under this policy including mandatory reporting.

Principle 5: We will put systems in place with our partners to advance safeguarding

UnitingWorld's international programming is delivered by and through local partners. We will work with partners to strengthen their safeguarding policies, procedures and practices.

Principle 6: We will take a child and victim/survivor-centred approach to safeguarding

We will uphold the best interests of the child and prioritise the needs and wishes of victims/survivors.

Principle 7: We will ensure ethical and mandatory reporting of safeguarding incidents, including child protection and SEAH

4 Policy implementation

4.1 Upholding human rights and promoting the dignity and wellbeing of all people

We will:

- Progress human rights through a faith-based dialog, including by supporting partners to develop contextual theologies concerning human dignity and equality.
- Support partners to undertake contextual and risk analysis during project scoping and design. This process will help identify protection risks and how UnitingWorld may assist our partners and their communities to access their rights and increase their safety in accordance with international standards.
- Support partners to consult with communities to identify priority protection risks and mitigation strategies, and opportunities to strengthen citizens' and communities' capacity to advocate for themselves to access their rights, and include these in project designs.
- Prioritise hearing from vulnerable groups, including children, individuals who are reliant on humanitarian aid, and/or members of marginalised groups who face exclusion due to one or more aspects of their identity (such as gender, disability or ethnicity).
- Work with partners to monitor protection risks and mitigation strategies during project implementation.

4.2 Do no harm

We will:

- Internally and with partners, identify risks that may lead to harm, including to children, and incorporate mitigation strategies into project designs, annual plans and activity plans.
- Undertake quarterly reviews of project risks, which will be considered by the International Programs Committee and incorporated into quarterly Board reporting.
- Use the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) risk framework to assess and monitor project risks, which includes Social and Environmental Safeguards.
- Involve partners in developing and maintaining complaints and feedback mechanisms, including by asking how they want to tell us, or a third party, if they feel threatened by us or any of our activity.
- Support our partners to develop or refine an existing complaints and feedback mechanism in each community or context in which we jointly work, which:
 - is designed to suit the specific needs of each partner's context and the needs of the people who participate in their projects.
 - is easily accessible and clearly communicated to beneficiaries and staff, including particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups of people including children.
 - includes a project Focal Person, to whom project participants and/or community members can report all concerns or allegations of child protection concerns, and incidents of sexual harassment, abuse or exploitation, relating to both adults and children.

- Deal immediately with concerns and reports if they arise, in particular SEAH and child protection disclosures.
- Recognise that some groups are more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and harassment than others and seek to ensure that our systems for assessing and responding to risks of child abuse and SEAH are accessible and contextually appropriate.
- Assess our and partners' compliance with this policy and relevant PSEAH and child safeguarding minimum standards and continuously adapt for improvement.
- Review, adapt and/or revise safeguarding practices based on sector best practice, analysis of safeguarding reports (and other complaints) received, and ongoing conversations with stakeholders.

4.3 Addressing gender inequality and other power imbalances

We will:

- Ensure women and people from other vulnerable or marginalised groups are represented in decision-making and leadership positions, where possible.
- Assess benefits to, and possible negative impacts of projects on, vulnerable groups including women, children and people with disabilities as part of design and annual planning processes (for example through a gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) analysis) and include response strategies in project designs and in response to project monitoring and evaluation.
- Promote women's and children's rights and empowerment, including through theological discourse with partners.
- Review positive and negative impacts of the project on vulnerable groups, including women, children and people with disabilities, as part of project monitoring and evaluation.

4.4 Sharing responsibility for safeguarding

4.4.1 Key safeguarding responsibilities for specific roles within UnitingWorld

The Board will:

- Review and approve safeguarding policies, ensuring they comply with standards in safeguarding especially of children and vulnerable adults.
- Review the organisational and project risk registers on a quarterly basis.
- Set clear expectations and model respectful behaviour in their interactions at work. These standards will be assessed as part of performance and Board evaluations.
- Take measures to improve diversity and inclusion, including by referencing gender and safeguarding expertise when recruiting new persons to the Board.
- Use the Agency Risk Register and Business Plan as standing Board agenda items to check progress on our commitment to safeguarding including diversity and inclusion.

The International Programs Committee will:

- Monitor policy implementation and project risks.
- Review annual summary of partner safeguarding systems assessments.

The Finance Audit and Risk Committee will:

- Monitor organisational risks and review safeguarding incidents.
- Review periodic whole-of-organisation safeguarding assessments and action plans as part of compliance monitoring.

The National Director and Executive Team will:

- Ensure UnitingWorld implements safeguarding policies.
- Develop and support procedures which maintain a welcoming, inclusive, dignified, transparent, accountable and safe environment.

- Set clear expectations and model respectful behaviour in their interactions at work. These standards will be assessed as part of performance evaluations.
- Appoint a **Safeguarding Committee**, to ensure a whole-of-agency approach, comprising the Head of Operations, a Programs Team (PT) Safeguarding Representative and Fundraising and Communications Team (FCT) Safeguarding Representative. The detailed roles and responsibilities of the Committee, which includes leading on the development of safeguarding procedures and undertaking assessments of policy implementation and safeguarding practice, will be described in the Safeguarding Committee and Focal Point Terms of Reference.

The Head of Operations will:

- Manage complaints related to the conduct of UnitingWorld Representatives and any safeguarding concerns or reports.
- Report any child protection or SEAH issues relating to donor-funded activities to the donor, including DFAT.
- Develop and maintain all safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring internal consistency, and embed safeguarding and protection across our operations and programs.

The Head of Programs and their team will:

- Support partners to meet minimum safeguarding standards (including child safeguarding and PSEAH), including through policy development and review.
- Ensure every project has an in-country Safeguarding Focal Point(s), and that partner project staff and project participants know who this individual or individuals are.
- Work with partners to undertake safeguarding and risk analyses during project design and annual planning, including identifying mitigations of risks.
- Review project risk assessments and report on safeguarding issues or achievements on a quarterly basis, for presentation to the Board.

The Head of Communication and Fundraising and their team will:

- Ensure that all communications, especially those containing images of children, adhere to the standards outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Apply a safeguarding lens to all communications and fundraising activities and material and prioritise the protection and dignity of community members who share their stories.

4.4.2 Understanding Safeguarding Responsibilities

We will:

- Ensure that all UnitingWorld Representatives are aware of the behaviour expected of them, as outlined in the Code of Conduct, and safeguarding responsibilities, according to their role and in accordance with their level of contact with children and/or vulnerable or marginalised groups.
- Include guidance on child safeguarding, PSEAH and expected behaviours to contractors as part of their induction and/or contracting.
- Provide Board members, staff, interns and volunteers annual safeguarding training on the Safeguarding and Protection Policy, and other related policies and procedures, covering:
 - child safeguarding and child protection
 - PSEAH
 - expected behaviours as outlined in the Code of Conduct
 - reporting requirements
- Ensure partner personnel who are UnitingWorld representatives participate in annual safeguarding training, including child safeguarding and PSEAH and expected behaviours as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

4.5 Advancing safeguarding with our partners

We will:

- Include safeguarding provisions and statements in Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and in Letters of Agreement (LOA) with partners, including requirements that:
 - UnitingWorld and partners both meet safeguarding minimum standards.
 - partner staff involved in UnitingWorld activities sign and abide by the Code of Conduct
 - partners appoint one or more project Safeguarding Focal Points (including specific responsibilities for child safeguarding and PSEAH). This person will undertake training in safeguarding (including child protection and PSEAH), have this responsibility as a clear part of his/her work plan and have clear channels demarcated to report her/his findings to senior management.
 - partners advise UnitingWorld of all safeguarding concerns or allegations related to UnitingWorld-funded projects, or about our representatives (this includes child abuse, SEAH and other breaches of this policy or Code of Conduct). LOAs will include information about how to make a report.
- Work with our partners to communicate the standards of conduct expected of UnitingWorld and our partners' staff and raise awareness of our Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies.
- Explicitly agree with our partners that certain disciplinary procedures pertain to any individuals who are UnitingWorld Representatives in line with the Code of Conduct.
- Assess partners' safeguarding systems and processes as part of the design and annual planning phases, and include areas for development in annual plans.
- Periodically collate findings of partner safeguarding systems' assessments to monitor the effectiveness of UnitingWorld's support and identify areas of focus.
- Dedicate a proportion of annual project budgets to supporting partners to develop their capacity in safeguarding, protection and GEDSI.

4.6 Taking a child/victim/survivor-centred approach

We will:

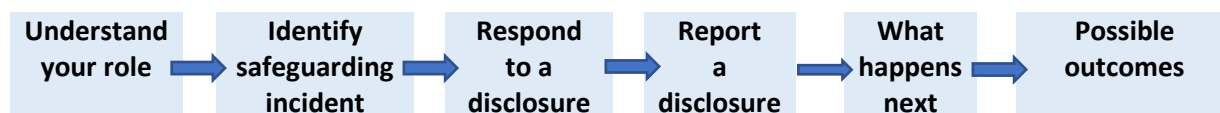
- Work with partners to include children in the design of complaints and feedback mechanisms, especially for projects classified as 'working with children'.
- Always report child-related incidents to the proper authorities.
- Report where reporting is in line with the wishes of the adult victim/survivor and does not place the victim/survivor, person reporting, or perpetrator at risk.
- Manage all safeguarding incidents confidentially on a need-to-know basis and advise complainants/reporters that they can choose to report anonymously or be de-identified.
- Make support available to victims/survivors as outlined in the Complaints and Incident Handling Policy.

4.7 Ethical and Mandatory Reporting

We will:

- Handle safeguarding disclosures and reports as incidents.
- Report all child-related incidents to the responsible statutory authorities where complaints or incidents indicate a criminal offence may have been committed, and support partners to do the same.
- Report any child protection or SEAH issues relating to donor-funded activities to the donor, including DFAT, in the required timeframe.
- Document reporting procedures for child protection and SEAH and make these available publicly and to all UnitingWorld Representatives, as presented below.

4.8 Sharing How we Respond to and Report Safeguarding Incidents



UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE

Anyone can report a safeguarding incident to UnitingWorld. If you are a UnitingWorld Representative, you **must** report.

IDENTIFYING SAFEGUARDING INCIDENTS

A **safeguarding incident** is when you know or suspect a UnitingWorld representative *or* someone in the context of a UnitingWorld supported activity is:

- harming children (anyone under 18 years old) in any way, or engaging children in any form of sexual activity
- using power or position to threaten or actually withhold assistance or services, or to benefit in any way by giving some people preferential treatment
- having sexual relationships with people engaged in the project or part of crisis affected communities
- exchanging assistance, money, employment, goods or services for sexual acts or favours
- engaging in other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour
- breaching UnitingWorld's Code of Conduct or Safeguarding and Protection Policy

You may **know** or **suspect** because:

- a child or adult victim/survivor tells (discloses to) you they are being harmed
- another person tells you that a child or adult is being harmed or a breach has taken place
- you have a reasonable belief that a child or adult is at risk of significant harm or a breach has taken place

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

If a child or adult victim/survivor discloses to you:

- Reassure them that they did the right thing by speaking out about the abuse
- Reassure them that you believe them
- Inform them that you need to tell people who will try to help them (don't make promises you can't keep)
- Avoid questioning – leave this to the professionals
- Make notes as soon as possible
- Practice self-care by recognising that receiving a disclosure of abuse can be confronting and seek support from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or elsewhere

In all cases:

- Tell the person you will need to formally report what they have told you, and explain that their details will be treated confidentially and only shared with people who need to know. Explain they can choose to be de-identified and opt out of receiving a follow-up report.
- Make sure the person reporting and/or child or adult affected are safe.

- If a child is in immediate danger, notify appropriate authorities. In Australia, call the police on **000**.

REPORTING A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPECTED SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT

Report all known or suspected safeguarding incidents within 24 hours, or as soon as practically possible.

UnitingWorld staff, Board members and volunteers must collect information in an Incident Report Form and escalate to Head of Operations and the National Director immediately.

Everyone else (contractors, partner staff, project participants etc) can report to **any** UnitingWorld staff member, Board member, or volunteer in person or by phone, email, text, social media, etc.

- General Complaints and Incidents | complaints@unitingworld.org.au
- Head of Operations – Katherine Lynch | +61 466 266 170 | katherinel@unitingworld.org.au
- National Director – Sureka Goringe | +61 414 555 349 | surekag@unitingworld.org.au

In your report, tell us:

- Your name and contact details (unless you wish to remain anonymous)
- What is happening/happened (or what do you suspect is happening/happened?)
- When did it happen, or in what time period?
- Who is involved? What are their ages?
- How did you find out about it? If someone told you, tell us exactly what was said.
- What support, if any, do you or others involved need?

If you need additional guidance or assistance or prefer to speak with someone outside UnitingWorld, you can contact the Uniting Church in Australia Safe Church Unit | (02) 8267 4381 | SafeChurch@nswact.uca.org.au

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

If requested, the Incident Report will be de-identified. UnitingWorld, or a partner organisation, will assess the safety needs of victims/survivors and perpetrators and will provide support.

Criminal matters will be reported to the relevant authorities.

There will be an initial assessment and investigation to establish facts and gather information. This may be led by UnitingWorld or a partner organisation.

A survivor centred approach will be taken during all investigations into safeguarding incidents. All investigations will be carried out fairly and with respect to the wishes of the victim/survivor.

If the safeguarding incident relates to a DFAT funded activity, or if DFAT activities are likely to be impacted, UnitingWorld will report:

- safeguarding incidents involving children **within 24 hours** to childwelfare@dfat.gov.au.
- safeguarding incidents involving sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of adults **within 2 working days** to seah.reports@dfat.gov.au.
- policy non-compliance within 5 working days.

If the safeguarding incident relates to joint CAN DO project, UnitingWorld will follow the reporting steps outlined in the CAN DO Standard Operating Procedures.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

If the investigation determines a breach of the UnitingWorld Code of Conduct or the Safeguarding and Protection Policy, disciplinary measures will apply up to dismissal.

Feedback will be given where possible to those directly involved within 30 days.

Further support, including counselling, will be offered to victims/survivors as needed.

OTHER INFORMATION

Uniting Church Synod of NSW/ACT guidance

The Uniting Church Synod of NSW/ACT provides the following instructions for speaking out about concerns relating to the safety of a child:

- **If a child is in immediate danger**, ring 000 and report to police. Inform your Safe Church Contact Person that you have made a report.
- **If a child is not in immediate danger**, contact your Safe Church Contact Person who will assist with making a record of the disclosure (or your observations) if you have not already done so and advise on reporting.

The Uniting Church Synod of NSW/ACT provides the following additional guidance for reporting incidents or concerns in confidence:

- If possible, you should inform your Minister or a member of your Church Council directly (for UnitingWorld this is the Complaints Officer and/or National Director).
- Email the Risk, Safety and Compliance team at SafeChurch@nswact.uca.org.au or call them on 02 9267 4381
- Call the Uniting Church Speak Out Hotline on 1800 951 145. This service is managed by our partner, Core Integrity, experts in managing Speak Out issues, so you can feel safe to report your matter. All matters are treated in the strictest confidence and calls are not recorded.

Further information can be found in the Synod's *Safe Church Guideline for Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse (2018)*. This guideline is to assist congregations of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and ACT with responding to and reporting child abuse, and suspected child abuse.

Who are mandatory reporters?

NSW

In NSW, some professionals, known as mandatory reporters, are required by law to report child abuse to government authorities. Mandatory reporters are people who deliver the following services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work:

- Health care (e.g. registered medical practitioners, specialists, general practice nurses, midwives, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, dentists and other allied health professionals working in sole practice or in public or private health practices)
- Welfare (e.g. psychologists, social workers, caseworkers and youth workers)
- Education (e.g. teachers, counsellors, principals)
- Children's services (e.g. child care workers, family day carers and home-based carers)
- Residential services (e.g. refuge workers)
- Law enforcement (e.g. police)

In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act). More information about mandatory reporting in NSW can be found at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/What-is-Mandatory-Reporting>

Other States

The groups of people mandated to notify cases of suspected child abuse and neglect range across the different states, from persons in a limited number of occupations (e.g., Qld), to a more extensive list (Vic., WA), to a very extensive list (ACT, NSW, SA, Tas.), through to **every adult** (NT; and Vic. for sexual offences). For states where any adult is deemed a mandatory reporter (NT and Vic, for certain offences), please see below:

Victoria

Who is a mandatory reporter?

- For sexual offences, any adult.
- For non-sexual offences, persons of particular professions.

What must be reported?

- A reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by another person of or over the age of 18 years must disclose that information to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

Northern Territory

Who is a mandatory reporter?

- Any adult

What must be reported?

- A belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation

Detailed information about mandatory reporting in other Australian states is available at: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>

5 Related Resources

UnitingWorld's commitment to prevent harm and promote the dignity and fullness of life across the agency and its work are implemented through a suite of policies and other relevant documents, including:

- Professional Conduct Policy*
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Communication and Transparency Policy*
- Complaints and Incident Handling Policy*
- Risk Management Policy
- Whistleblower Policy*
- UnitingWorld Code of Conduct*
- Complaints and Incident Management Procedure
- UnitingWorld Board Covenant
- UnitingWorld Ambassador Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Committee and Focal Point Terms of Reference
- Relevant Induction packages for Board, staff, volunteers and contractors

*These policies are available on UnitingWorld's website.

UnitingWorld is also guided by and works in the context of the following national and international codes, conventions and reports:

- United Nations: *Interagency Standing Committee Minimum Operating Standards – Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (IASC MOS-PSEA)*
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/3_minimum_operating_standards_mos-psea.pdf
- DFAT *Preventing Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy (2019)*
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/preventing-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>
- DFAT *Child Protection Policy (2018)* <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/Pages/child-protection>.
- Church Agencies' Network Disaster Operations *CAN DO Standard Operating Procedure (2019)*
- Joint Statement and 22 Commitments (UK-led International Summit to Tackle Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in the Aid Sector (October 2018)
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/uk-safeguarding-summit-donor-commitments.pdf>
- UK BOND the International Development Network, *Our Commitment to Change in Safeguarding*
<https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/our-commitment-to-change-in-safeguarding>
- ACFID Code of Conduct (2019 update) <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/>
- *Shaping the Path Report* (ACFID commissioned, VIFM, 2019) <https://www.vifm.org/wp-content/uploads/ACFID-Report-Final.pdf>
- *Child Safeguarding Learning Review* (ACFID commissioned, L4D, 2021)
https://acfid.asn.au/sites/site.acfid/files/resource_document/Child%20Safeguarding%20Learning%20Review%20Report_web%20version.pdf

6 Glossary of Terms

Abuse: any action or inaction that causes harm to another person. It can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. It also includes abuse online and/or through mobile technology.

Bullying: repeated, inappropriate, overt and covert behaviour that criticises, belittles, isolates and undermines the victim. It involves humiliation, sabotage, spreading gossip, overwork, unnecessary pressure, delaying tactics and can escalate into physical and verbal assault, sexual assault and arson.

Bystander: A Bystander is person who witnesses an incident first hand, or who hears about it afterwards (Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bystander Fact Sheet for Employees*, n.d, accessed 2 March, 2019, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/projects/sexual-harassment-know-where-line>).

Child: anyone under the age of 18. This is irrespective of local country definitions, including legal definitions, of when a child reaches adulthood, in line with the DFAT, *PSEAH Policy*, 2019.

Child Abuse: All forms of physical or mental (especially emotional) violence, injury or abuse, ill-treatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse, is child abuse. Child abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children either physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or in some other way.

Child protection: an activity or initiative designed to protect and respond to child abuse and risk of abuse (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017).

Child safeguarding: The internal facing policies, procedures and practices employed to ensure that an organisation's operations and programs do not expose children to adverse impacts, including the risk of abuse and exploitation, and that all Representatives are aware of and respond appropriately to concerns or issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017; and ACT Alliance, *Child Safeguarding Policy*, 2015, accessed 14 August 2019, https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.at/fileadmin/mediapool/Downloads/Allgemein/Child-Safeguarding-policy_ACT.pdf#targetText=The%20ACT%20Alliance%20holds%20a,Child%20Safeguarding%20policy%20and%20procedures).

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about UnitingWorld, our programs, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required (Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002-2022 Guidelines for Complaints Handling in Organisations)

Contact with Children: 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 (also see *Working with children* definition).

DFAT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Discrimination: Discrimination means exclusion of, treatment of, or action against an individual based on social status, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, or disability.

Do No Harm: The principle of “do no harm” is taken from medical ethics. It requires humanitarian organisations to strive to minimise the harm they may inadvertently cause through providing aid, as well harm that may be caused by not providing aid (such as adding to tensions with host communities – see J M B Characle and E Lucchi, *Incorporating the principle of “Do No Harm”: How to take action without causing harm*, ALNAP, 2018, accessed August 2019, https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/donoharm_pe07_synthesis.pdf).

Emotional abuse: any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth (N Tracy, *Emotional Abuse: Definitions, Signs, Symptoms, Examples*, HealthyPlace, 2021, accessed 20 January, 2023, <https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/emotional-psychological-abuse/emotional-abuse-definitions-signs-symptoms-examples>).

Exploitation: any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust to profit monetarily, socially or politically. It includes sexual exploitation.

Focal point: A person or group of persons designated to receive complaints of cases of child abuse and exploitation, and sexual exploitation and abuse (IASC, *Guidelines to Implement Minimum Operating Standards for the PSEAH*, 2013).

Harassment: Any unwelcome comment or behaviour that is offensive, demeaning, humiliating, derogatory, or any other inappropriate behaviour that fails to respect the dignity of an individual. Harassment can be committed by or against any member of the community with whom we work, partners, employee, vendor or other individual visiting or doing business with an agency (see **sexual harassment** below).

Ill-treatment: disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate or improper manner; making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and/or a pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate degrading comments or behaviour towards a child (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017).

Misconduct: or improper behaviour. A breach of UnitingWorld’s Code of Conduct (see also Serious Misconduct).

Neglect: The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017).

Physical abuse: The use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017).

Protection: Activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law’ (IASC, *Workshop on Protection for Human Rights and Humanitarian organisations*, held at ICRC Geneva 18-20 Jan, 1999). Essentially, ensuring basic human rights, welfare and physical security are recognised, safeguarded and protected in accordance with international standards.

PSEAH: Acronym for Preventing Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Safeguarding: The international aid sector uses the term ‘safeguarding’ to mean ‘protecting staff from harm and from harming others’. PSEAH and child protection/safeguarding come under this umbrella term, which covers preventing and addressing exploitative, harmful and abusive behaviours and practices, and the associated processes, initiatives, frameworks and policies. Safeguarding also involves organisations

maintaining policies, procedures and trusted mechanisms through which those who observe or experience abuse can raise concerns – either directly or anonymously (Humanitarian Action Group, *CAN DO Standard Operating Procedure*, 2019).

SEAH: Acronym for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Serious Misconduct: Conduct that is wilful or deliberate and that is inconsistent with the continuation of a person's employment contract. It is also conduct that causes serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of a person or to the reputation, viability or profitability of the employer's business (Fair Work Commission, *Unfair Dismissals Benchbook*, n.d. accessed 20 January, 2023, <https://www.fwc.gov.au/conduct>).

Sexual abuse: the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (IASC, Guidelines to implement the Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and non-UN Personnel, 2013). It covers sexual offences including but not limited to: attempted rape (which includes attempts to force someone to perform oral sex); and sexual assault (which includes non-consensual kissing and touching). All sexual activity with someone under the age of consent (in the law of the host country or under Australian Capital Territory law [16 years], whichever is greater) is considered to be sexual abuse (DFAT, *PSEAH Policy*, 2019).

Sexual exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, sexually or politically from the sexual exploitation of another (IASC, 2013; DFAT, *PSEAH Policy*, 2019).

Sexual harassment: A person sexually harasses another person if the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance or an unwelcome request for sexual favours or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated (DFAT, *PSEAH Policy*, 2019). Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can be obvious or indirect, physical or verbal, repeated or one-off and perpetrated by any person of any gender towards any person of any gender. Sexual harassment can be perpetrated against beneficiaries, community members, citizens, as well as staff and personnel (UCA National Assembly policy: People and Relationships, Section 4 Behaviour and Ethics).

Survivor/victim: A person who is, or has been, sexually exploited harassed or abused (DFAT, *PSEAH Policy*, 2019). Survivor implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive (UCA National Assembly policy: People and Relationships, Section 4 Behaviour and Ethics).

Volunteer: Volunteer refers to unpaid community members who participate in UnitingWorld activities for an extended or repeated period.

Vulnerable adult: an individual aged 18 years or over who is at greater risk of significant harm due to factors such as gender, age, mental or physical health, or as a result of poverty, inequality or experience of displacement or crisis. In an international development context, an example might be a person with reliance on humanitarian aid with another intersecting vulnerability such as a disability or their ethnicity.

Working with Children: Working with children means 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 (DFAT, *Child Protection Policy*, 2017).

7 Review Schedule

Date of next review: March 2026