

Pacific Aid Australia

Code of Conduct

Child Protection Policy

1. This document sets out the Pacific Aid Australia’s Child Protection Policy and Procedures. It is for all members and staff and is available also to all supporters. The Policy and Procedures are also available to others outside Pacific Aid Australia who wants to know how Pacific Aid Australia works in relation to child protection.
2. Pacific Aid Australia does not work directly with children. However, we have undertaken to implement this policy in relation to any member (including staff) working overseas or here at home who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, in the course of their work. We do not seek to impose our policy verbatim on the partner agencies but we expect them to have in place and actively to implement a child protection policy consistent with our own and with the law of the country in which they work.
3. The Policy applies to all members and staff as part of their obligations to Pacific Aid Australia.
4. Pacific Aid Australia has become aware of the need to make explicit and visible our determination that our work and activities must promote the safety and security of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
5. Child Protection Policy: Core Statements

Pacific Aid Australia and all its staff and members, undertake to do all in our power to create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Pacific Aid Australia is committed to acting at all times in the best interests of children and vulnerable adults, seeing these interests as paramount. We will do this by:

* 1. Setting in place, implementing and regularly monitoring and reviewing procedures to protect: children; young people; and vulnerable adults. These procedures cover Pacific Aid Australia’s recruitment practice, staff training, and management responsibilities.
	2. Adopting a code of behaviour for all staff and members.
	3. Ensuring that any allegations of abuse about a staff member, volunteer (member) working overseas or a member here at home (carrying out PAA work) are promptly and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account. All allegations of abuse of a child will be reported to the statutory bodies.
	4. Ensuring that Pacific Aid Australia works in close liaison with statutory agencies when necessary so that risk to children and vulnerable adults is minimised.
	5. Aiming to be an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse and in responding to it.

For the purposes of this policy, Pacific Aid Australia regards children and young people as those who are under the age of 18. The Pacific Aid Australia’s policy applies to all children and vulnerable adults with whom Pacific Aid Australia has contact regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity.

Pacific Aid Australia recognises that vulnerable adults may also be in need of particular protection, and recognises that the needs and concerns of this group may be different from those of children. Pacific Aid Australia will extend this policy to include specific commitments relevant to this group. Pacific Aid Australia intends that its child protection procedures will ensure a safe and protected environment for vulnerable adults in regard to Pacific Aid Australia’s work and activities.

Pacific Aid Australia intends that our commitment to the safety and protection of children in our international work should reflect the same values and principles that underpin our organisational policy commitments at home.

# Pacific Aid Australia’s context and work: principles of child protection

Pacific Aid Australia has an organisational office based in Sydney. We may work through other organisations to organise events and activities for fundraising and/or campaign purposes, in which children may be involved alongside Pacific Aid Australia staff and members.

Pacific Aid Australia believes that all staff and members need to be aware of our policy and commitments in relation to child protection even though the majority of our staff and many members may never have any unaccompanied contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults through their work.

# Definition of Abuse

Abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children or young people under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults, either physically or in some other way. In the majority of cases, the abuser is someone the child or young person knows well, such as a parent, friend or relative. There are four main kinds of abuse:

* Physical abuse is actual or likely physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
* Emotional abuse is harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, not giving care and affection and bullying, resulting in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person or vulnerable adult.
* Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment to their health or development.
* Sexual abuse occurs if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is used for the sexual gratification of the adult – whether or not they are pressured or forced. Sexual abuse includes incest, rape and fondling. It may also include non-contact activities such as showing pornography or internet based activity. Sexual abuse may involve siblings or other family members, or persons outside the family.
* Abuse may be current or recent, or in some cases, historical, i.e. an adult may disclose sexual abuse that took place when he/she was a child. Abuse may be carried out by adult men or women, or by siblings or other young people.

- PAA will have a child protection risk assessment matrix embedded in its project proposal and plan that will identify at which point children may be exposed to any of PAA activities, or volunteers.

- PAA will not use Use of images and personal information for fundraising and promotion purposes that in any way complrmise a child or portray a child other than in the context of the project. PAA will ensure. Moving forward, written authorisation for use of photos by parents, or school ( thorugh school photo waoiver).

c. Personnel recruitment including staff, volunteers, consultants and suppliers – in both Australia and overseas;

d. All applicable legal obligations including mandatory police checks where available and appropriate for all personnel who have regular contact with children; All members of staff working with children or volunteers, or corporate volunteers, will have to have a police check for working with children. Where a partner organisation of PAA is sening staff to the filed on our behalf, PAA will transmit our child protection policy to the partner and request that the partner organisation supply a working with children police check, as well as supplying the partner org and volunteer with PAA documentation on appropriate behavoir with children in the filed guidelines, that explicitly cover cover all prohibited and appropriate behavoir when around children behvoir. Develop a plan for distrcution of policy and procedures to all volunteer training and staff trains, all staff meetings, all volunteer meetings, mailing to local group coordinators etc.

Where we use partners in country, PAA will condnuct a check through emabassy, through local police and any other means where appropriate ( recommendations per), and ask for character references.

Address training

Members of staff aare asked to sign a self declaration which says “ I have the child protection policy and I will act according to it. I never committed a crime related to child protection”.

e. Behaviour protocols or codes;

f. Education and training of personnel and communication of the policy to all stakeholders; and

g. Reporting procedures. b.3.4 a policy address use of images forfund raisng and protional pruposes

1.c – personal recruitment inlcudung staff volunteers including sta and suppliers in oz and overseas,

Oz only police check, or os police check. Use of references. Recruitment process be dependent on how much access tey will have with children. If a volunteer goes os. They need tp provide a police check to us. Can use character or work referees. – not putting children and organization at risk

Child image display guidelines ; to help protect

* n order to help protect the privacy, dignity and personal safety of every sponsored child, World Vision has developed the following guidelines in line with our Child Protection Policies.

###### Displaying photos of your sponsored child

Sponsoring a child is a wonderful experience and one we encourage you to share with loved ones. You're welcome to display photos of your sponsored child at your home or personal space at work/business to share your experience of helping a child in need.

###### Copying photos of your sponsored child

World Vision is required by law and by our own policies to limit the distribution of information and images of sponsored children. As a child sponsor, you may enlarge a photo of your sponsored child to display it at home or your personal space at work/business, along with basic personal information (name, age and country only), but you'll need our written permission, which you can request by calling **13 32 40.**

If you sponsor a child as a part of a group, you can make additional copies of the photo to give to each financially contributing member of that group. Once again, though, you'll need our permission, which you can request by calling **13 32 40.**

###### Online publishing and emailing photos of your sponsored child

Emailing and publishing photos and personal information of your sponsored child online creates risks to the privacy, dignity and personal safety of the child. We ask you not to place your sponsored child’s photo and/or personal information (age, last name, geographical location, health, education or other) on a website (internet or intranet) or email it to others.

By agreement with each particular country and community, World Vision is allowed to display child photos and information on the World Vision website only.

###### Promoting World Vision child sponsorship

We welcome those who wish to help us find new sponsors. On our [**web assets**](http://www.worldvision.com.au/AboutUs/OurPolicies/Webassets.aspx) you'll find banner ads and clickable links that you can download and place on your website to encourage others to sponsor a child.

[**Back to top**](http://www.worldvision.com.au/AboutUs/OurPolicies/ChildProtection.aspx)

## Child protection on the World Vision Website

World Vision is committed to protecting the security, privacy, and dignity of the children whose parents, guardians and community leaders have graciously allowed to be a part of our child sponsorship programs.

The policies below describe how we protect children in relation to the web sponsorship process.

###### Child security

Children have the right to be completely secure from the fear or reality of any potential abuse (either physical or emotional) resulting from an inappropriate contact by a sponsor or any other person.

You will notice as you proceed through our sponsorship site that we release only limited information about the children. We don't include last names, community names or locations, or any other information that might identify the location of the child. We intentionally withhold this information until after the identity of the sponsor is verified.

By agreeing to become a child sponsor, you also agree not to attempt to contact a sponsored child, his or her family or community members, in any manner other than that prescribed and permitted in advance in writing by World Vision. Telephone calls, emails or unplanned visits to the child's residence and community are not allowable without the written permission and oversight of World Vision. Letters and packages can be sent by post, and you can read instructions on what you can send in the material mailed to you after you become a sponsor.

###### Child privacy

We take potential misuse of child photographs on the web very seriously. Children and their families must be assured that World Vision is protecting the integrity of the information about themselves that they've given us, including photographs. Privacy also demands that children, their families and communities be shielded from any potential inappropriate contact from sponsors or others.

That's why we don't allow downloading, copying, or replicating photos or other information relating to children and their communities on this website without our prior written permission. Child profiles are presented for the purpose of conveying appropriate information about the sponsorship relationship, and are not to be distributed.

Our photos of children are encoded with a digital watermark. They can't be downloaded and unauthorised access to the source data has been blocked. World Vision monitors the web for inappropriate use of these images and we're committed to pursuing every available legal recourse to stopping their misuse. For more information on our content policy, please refer to our[**Assets for Web page**](http://www.worldvision.com.au/AboutUs/Webassets.aspx).

###### Child dignity

The lives of children, their families, and members of their community should be represented with accuracy and dignity. We consider the children we work with as our partners, working with us to help bring holistic transformation to communities living in poverty. We seek the full, informed consent of parents, guardians, and/or community leaders for a child's participation in our child sponsorship programs.

If you have any questions about any of these policies, [**please email us**](http://trans.worldvision.com.au/contact/form_contact.asp).

* There are some groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable; children with disabilities are among these, and children from ethnic minority communities who may be particularly vulnerable if their communities suffer from discrimination. Children who are refugees or asylum seeking, and children living in residential care are also among these groups. Abuse may also take place in families in which there is alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence or mental health problems.
* Although the statutory protection defines children and young people as those under the age of 18, care should also be taken of adults who are vulnerable through disability or other factors.

# The Pacific Aid Australia’s Child Protection Procedures

1. **Recruitment of Staff and Members**
* If applicable, candidates will be asked to describe their previous experience of working with children, young people or vulnerable adults and to provide a referee who can comment on their work in this context.
* Job offers made in relation to assignments will be subject to satisfactory verification of qualifications and the candidate’s CV.
* Candidates (whether staff members or volunteers) will sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they might be deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults and being in their company.
* Australian Federal Police vetting will be undertaken for all members taking up an assignment with Pacific Aid Australia.

# Ensuring Awareness and Prevention

* Pacific Aid Australia’s commitment to child protection will be stated in appropriate corporate documents and on our website. Pacific Aid Australia will make its policy and procedures available to anyone who requests them.
* Pacific Aid Australia will ensure that all staff and members are aware of the Child Protection Policy and have access to a copy. This will also form part of our training programme for prospective members.
* Pacific Aid Australia expects all staff and members to follow the code of behaviour (see pages eight and nine). Pacific Aid Australia staff and members should make every effort to avoid situations in which they are lone adults working with one or more children. If urgent or practical circumstances result in such a situation occurring, staff and members should resolve it as soon as possible and note it to their managers. In any Pacific Aid Australia activity involving children or vulnerable adults, their parents, teachers or other relevant responsible adults should be present.
* All managers have the responsibility for ensuring that the staff they manage are aware of the Policy and for reminding them of its provisions when the need arises.
* Any Pacific Aid Australia staff or member planning events should ensure that child protection issues are considered as part of the risk analysis and/or health and safety arrangements.
* In planning or co-ordinating multi-agency or coalition or network organised events and activities, Pacific Aid Australia will ensure that child protection considerations have been taken into account if relevant.

# Dealing with Disclosures and Suspicion

Pacific Aid Australia recognises that disclosures (i.e. when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual) and suspicion (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) should always be reported to the statutory authorities who have sole responsibility for investigating complaints. While the matter is being investigated by the statutory authorities the Pacific Aid Australia member or volunteer may be asked to step aside from the activities of the organisation. Any information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people in authority. Parents or carers will also be informed if appropriate. Apart from this, careful confidentiality will be observed.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

* Listen to and accept what they are saying.
* Do not investigate, and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
* Take the alleged abuse seriously.
* Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing by telling you.
* Let them know you need to tell someone else. Do not promise total confidentiality.
* Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult speak freely but do not press for information.
* Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
* Record carefully (on the form below) what you have heard whilst it is still fresh in your mind. Include the date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed.
* If any staff or member suspects abuse, or if a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, or if a person external to Pacific Aid Australia reports a suspicion or allegation relating to Pacific Aid Australia staff, members or activities, the following steps should be taken:
* Avoid any delay.
* Report this to the person designated as the Child Protection Officer. This is currently the Chief Executive Officer
* If the suspicion or allegation relates to activities or persons working in a school or in another setting, ensure that the relevant Child Protection Officer or other appropriate authority is also informed.
* The Child Protection designated officer will ensure a report is made and given to the appropriate Social Services Department and Police Station. However, if urgent action is required to protect children this should be done immediately.

- No staff or other member will prejudice their own standing or position within Pacific Aid Australia by responsibly reporting potential or suspected child abuse.

**Reporting Form**

# Part One: Person Reporting

Name

PAA Staff / Member overseas (volunteer) / Member at home (please circle relevant one)

Details of any other organisation involved

Your relationship to the child or young persons or vulnerable adult concerned

# Part Two: About the Child/Young Person(s)

Name(s)

Male or female?

Age

Address

Who does the child or young person live with?

# Part Three: About Your Concern

How did you come to have a concern: was abuse observed or suspected?

Was an allegation made?

Did a child disclose abuse?

Date, time and place of any incident(s)

Nature of concern/allegation

Observations made by you (e.g. child’s emotional state, any physical evidence)

Write down exactly what the child said and what you said: continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Any other relevant information? (e.g. disability? language?)

Were other children involved or aware?

Have you reported to parents or carers or any other Child Protection Personnel (including designated officer(s) and statutory authorities)?

Person(s) to whom report was made (Designated Child Protection Officer) Time and date of reporting

Advice given

Action taken

# Pacific Aid Australia’s Responsibilities and How We Will Act

If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation of child abuse, that staff member will be asked to take leave from their duties until an investigation has been completed. If a Pacific Aid Australia member (on assignment overseas or in Australia) is the subject of an allegation of child abuse, that member will be asked to withdraw from their work until an investigation has been completed. In all cases, it should be made clear that suspension does not imply guilt but rather protects all parties whilst an investigation is undertaken.

Pacific Aid Australia will see that the statutory authorities are informed if a disclosure of abuse takes place in which the alleged abuser is a member of Pacific Aid Australia, or the incident has taken place on Pacific Aid Australia premises or in connection with Pacific Aid Australia activities. If a disclosure of abuse takes place overseas, all reporting to the statutory authorities will be done in conjunction with our overseas partner(s).

If an allegation of child abuse is made involving Pacific Aid Australia staff or a member, this allegation, together with a record of the investigation undertaken and the outcome, will be recorded in their personnel files. Confidentiality regarding these records will be scrupulously maintained and information will only be released to those in positions of authority.

If a member of Pacific Aid Australia staff or anyone closely associated with Pacific Aid Australia work in some recognisable capacity is found to have committed acts in relation to children which are criminal or which contravene in a serious way the principles and standards set out in this policy, Pacific Aid Australia will take disciplinary action and/or any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances. If members are found to have committed such acts, their membership of Pacific Aid Australia will be ended.

# Reviewing this policy and reporting to Pacific Aid Australia’s Chair.

Pacific Aid Australia will ensure that this policy is reviewed every two years and that an annual report on any incidents relating to child protection is made to the governing body.

# Code of Behaviour

There are some simple rules and procedures that will minimise the risk of an incident occurring or being alleged. Most of these are common sense and will already be followed, but it is important that staff and members specifically check that they are being implemented in any event which involves children, young people or vulnerable adults.

* Treat everyone with respect, recognising their right to personal privacy.
* Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them.
* Plan and organise the event so that risks are minimised.
* Recognise that caution is required in all one-to-one situations.
* If it is a residential event, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodation.
* Provide access for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk to others about any concerns they have.
* Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
* Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
* Do not spend time alone with children – plan activities so that more than one adult is present or, at least, other people are within sight and hearing.
* Do not take children alone in a car, even for short journeys, unless this is unavoidable for safety reasons. If this is unavoidable, make sure an adult carer or another member of staff is aware it is happening.
* Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
* Avoid being drawn in to inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums or crushes
* Avoid showing favouritism to any individual.
* Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
* Do not trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues.
* Do not rely on just your good name to protect you.
* Do not believe “It could never happen to me”

[PAA Child Protection Policy document to be reviewed in March 2015]