

1. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to reduce the risk of AFAO contributing to child abuse or child exploitation through its programs. This policy outlines a risk management strategy and mechanisms for raising, reporting and responding to issues of child abuse.

AFAO will ensure the privacy and safeguarding of children in using images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education.

2. Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers, contractors (including consultants) and grantees are required to comply with this policy.

3. Application of policy

This policy applies fully to AFAO's operations, including its international activities and the AFAO Foundation. Unless indicated otherwise, references in this policy to AFAO include the AFAO Foundation.

Where this policy is contradicted by contractual obligations to funders, the contractual obligations must be adhered to. Exceptions to such obligations should be sought from funders prior to entering into contracts and any substantive areas of difference must be drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

Working directly and regularly with children is not a major focus of AFAO's work, nor the immediate environment within which program activities occur. However it is possible that AFAO's staff will come into contact with children in the course of general professional and personal conduct. Additionally, AFAO may sub-grant to other organisations and individuals whose activities will include direct contact with children.

All AFAO staff and volunteers abide by AFAO's Code of Conduct.

Orientation to this policy will be provided to all AFAO staff during their induction by their manager and regularly during the course of their employment through all-staff training.

AFAO will extend this policy to grantees through its contracts and require that grantees adopt the commitments of this policy. AFAO incorporates the requirements of this policy in its capacity assessment processes with grantees and provides training and support to grantees to support their upholding of these policy commitments.

Policy number: 031

Date approved: 25 June 2020

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Approved by: AFAO Board

4. Statement of commitment

AFAO is committed to the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child¹.

5. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

- *a child* is any person under the age of 18
- *contact with children* is “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”²
- *working with children* is “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”³
- *child exploitation* is “any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes”⁴.

6. Risk management framework

All AFAO staff and volunteers will be made aware of DFAT’s *Child Protection Policy* and the ACFID *Code of Conduct*. AFAO’s Code of Conduct, which all staff and volunteers are required to sign, includes provisions to protect children. The Manager responsible for each position will ensure that staff understand this policy and the obligations of staff under the Code of Conduct.

If a position responsible for activities assessed as either having contact with children or working directly and regularly with children, either as a function of the position or the environment within which activities occur, section 7 of this policy will additionally apply.

AFAO will continuously assess the work requirements and contexts and its staff roles to detect any movement from low risk (possible contact with children or no contact) to higher risk (working with children).

In establishing grant arrangements, AFAO will undertake an initial risk assessment for child contact and require grantees to report any changes that would give rise to change in this assessment.

This requirements of this Child Protection Policy will be discussed in quarterly reviews with grantees under AFAO’s international program. AFAO will require that grantees report any child protection issues arising under this Policy immediately to the AFAO manager responsible for the grant program (see section 8).

A requirement to identify and document any child protection matters will additionally form part of formal grantee reporting requirements and be included in AFAO reporting templates.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. www.unicef.org/crc

² DFAT Child Protection Policy, January 2018 <https://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/Documents/child-protection-policy.docx>

³ DFAT Child Protection Policy, January 2018 <https://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/Documents/child-protection-policy.docx>

⁴ In accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/25.htm

7. Contact with children

This section outlines additional measures required if any AFAO position is determined as having contact with children or working directly with children.

7.1 Screening at the time of recruitment

AFAO will screen staff and volunteers who will have contact with children at the time of recruitment. AFAO will not permit a person to have contact with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing

For any position involving contact with children, AFAO will have:

- a clear statement and promotion of AFAO's *Child Protection Policy*
- a clear position description outlining the specific duties and accountabilities of the position
- application forms that request extensive information about educational and professional background
- face-to-face employment interviews for all applicable appointments, including behavioural based questions that relate to child-safe behaviour
- A minimum of two verbal referee checks on all preferred candidates
- continuing screening throughout orientation and the probationary period.

7.2 Criminal record checks

Australian criminal record checks will be required as will checks for any country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the last five years.

The results of these checks will be for the sole use of AFAO and will remain confidential.

In the case of an audit, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade may require proof that these have been completed.

AFAO will not permit a person to have contact with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

7.3 Training

Training that includes general child safeguarding awareness and familiarisation with this Policy and the AFAO Code of Conduct will be provided to staff, volunteers and grantees on their commencement and at their annual review.

Child protection training will be provided to any staff member or volunteer who may have contact with children in their role.

8. Reporting

AFAO staff, volunteers, grantees and contractors must immediately report concerns related to child protection to:

AFAO's Australian programs

Heath Paynter, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Email: [FIRST NAME].[SURNAME]@afao.org.au
Phone: 02 9557 9399

AFAO's international programs

Inga Olesky, SKPA Program Manager

Email: [FIRST NAME].[SURNAME]@afao.org.au

Phone: +66 (0)2 023 0966

Any concerns about child protection relating to the Chief Executive Officer must be reported to the AFAO National President, Robert Griew, at president@afao.org.au or on 02 9557 9399.

All concerns will be handled in accordance with AFAO's Feedback and Complaints Policy.

Information received will be held in accordance with AFAO's Privacy Policy.

Where a breach of this policy involves possible criminal involvement in child abuse or child exploitation, AFAO's Deputy Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring AFAO meets all legal obligations to report offences.

9. Breach of this policy

AFAO's employment contracts contain provisions for the prevention of a person from working with children if they present an unacceptable risk to children.

Any staff member or volunteer who is found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer engagement.