

Policy Number: **OS05**

Policy Area: **Organisational Integrity and Standards**

Policy Title: **Child Protection**



Related Documents: OS06 GMP Code of Conduct
OS05.1 Child Safe Screening interview
OS02.1 Complaints Handling Process
OS08.1 Incident Report Form
P03 Public Communication
M04.1 Partner Visit Team Leader Application
M04.2 Partner Visit Application Team Member
Guidance Note Establishing Child Protection Risk
Context - DFAT Child Protection Policy
ACT Alliance Child Safeguarding Policy

Background:

GMP is committed to the safety and well-being of all children. Every individual or organization that works with children under any GMP project has an obligation to protect children from exploitation and abuse. Our collective responsibility is to implement this policy, and to use a risk management and common sense approach to create and maintain protective environments for children involved in our projects.

Policy:

General

1. A current Working With Children clearance is required for all Australian staff, and volunteers whose activities involve contact with children¹.
2. Screening of job applicants and Partner Visit Teams will include verbal referee checks and behaviour-based interview questions related to child protection issues.
3. All Australian staff, Board members and volunteers, as well as suppliers whose activities involve contact with children will sign to acknowledge that they have read, understood *OS05 Child Protection Policy* and agreed to *OS06 GMP Code of Conduct*.
4. GMP staff and volunteers responsible for media, child sponsorship and communications will receive training in keeping with *OS05 Child Protection Policy* and *OS06 GMP Code of Conduct*.
5. GMP staff and volunteers will receive child protection training in keeping with *OS05 Child Protection Policy* and *OS06 GMP Code of Conduct* prior to visits to child-related projects.

¹ Note: 'Working with Children Check' is used here in a generic sense. The relevant State clearance applies and need to be obtained and be current. See Definitions.

6. Any breach of the Code of Conduct will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Where the breach also breaks a law the police/government child protection unit will be informed.
7. GMP material will always portray children in a respectful, dignified manner and with the informed consent of the child and/or parent or guardian. (The informed consent of a child of mature understanding is accepted as sufficient and paramount. A child of mature understanding may veto a parent or guardian's consent.) All materials will represent the context and facts honestly, and in accordance with *P03 Public Communication*.
8. Children's privacy will be guarded. File labels, meta data or text descriptions will not reveal information about a child that would put them at risk when images are sent electronically or published in any form.
9. GMP will not involve children in any activity inappropriate to their age nor support any project that does.
10. GMP will take seriously all reports of child abuse, child exploitation and policy non-compliance and act on them promptly, confidentially and with support to alleged victim, accused and complainant. All complaints and reports of incidents go to the Executive Officer. *OS08.1 Incident Report Form* will be used for reporting incidents.
11. Where a potential risk to children is identified it will be reported using *OS08.1 Incident Report Form*.
12. In the event of a complaint being received the process described in *OS02.1 Complaints Handling Process* will be followed.

Partner Visits

1. All team members will have current Working with Children clearance. These will be reviewed before the team is recommended to a partner.
2. The team leader after being trained by GMP, or a GMP staff member will conduct a *OS05.1 Child Safe Screening* interview with volunteers travelling to projects where there may be children present. This screening will be valid for the same period as their Working with Children clearance.
3. Team leaders will ensure that there is a training session covering child protection issues, which all team members attend prior to travelling.
4. All team members will sign the Child Protection Guidelines and Code of Conduct included in the Introduction to Partner Visits Handbook or in *M04.1 and M04.2*.

Partners

1. All implementing partners will be required to show that child protection procedures appropriate to their circumstance and compliant with local legislation are operative before a project will be approved.
2. Partners are required to inform GMP promptly of any allegations or incidents of child abuse, or child exploitation, or breaches of their own Code of Conduct.
3. Partners are required to develop appropriate child protection policies and codes of practice that comply with local legislation and safeguard the children in their care.
4. GMP staff will assist partners to conduct assessments of child protection risks and implement relevant child protection strategies as required.

- Partners working with children will be assisted to survey local resources and bodies in relation to Child Protection.

Projects

- All project designs will include a consideration of how to safeguard any children involved.
- All project designs will include an assessment of risk using DFAT’s Establishing Child Protection Risk Context guidance notes.
- Any projects assessed as high risk to children will include a risk assessment and management plan relating to child protection.
- Any projects assessed as moderate risk will be monitored for changes in risk profile.

Definitions:

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| <p>Abuse</p> | <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - 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. - emotional abuse— a parent or caregiver’s inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child’s self-esteem or social competence. - sexual abuse—the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours can include fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism and exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography.⁸ |
| <p>Child</p> | <p>In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ‘child’ means every human being under the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. For the purposes of this policy a child is deemed to be a person under the age of 18 years.</p> |

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| Child exploitation and abuse | <p>One or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child - possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material - committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming. |
| Child exploitation material | Material, irrespective of its form, which is classified as child abuse material or child pornography material. |
| Child of mature understanding | A child who demonstrates understanding of the proposed use of their image when it is explained in plain language, (or with printed/visual examples) and is willing to make a decision. This maturity does not match a particular age, but is more likely in children over 12 years. |
| Child protection | An activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child exploitation and abuse. |
| 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. |
| Informed Consent | Consent given after the proposed action is explained (in plain language and/or with the aid of printed/visual examples) and understood. |
| Working With Children Check | <p>Australian state-based assessment of suitability to work with children. This includes a National Police Check as well as review of findings of workplace misconduct. Holders of a Working With Children Clearance are subject to ongoing monitoring for the validity period.</p> <p>(In ACT and Tasmania the check is called Working with Vulnerable People (Children) and in South Australia it is called Child-related Employment Screening)</p> |