



Partners in Aid

AUSTRALIA

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Including Code of Conduct for Working with Children)

Version control & review

Version	Date	Distribution
1.0	<2015	Board members; website link
2.0	June 2016	Board members; Committee members; NGOs implementing PIA supported projects; website link
3.0	January 2018	Board members; Committee members; NGOs implementing PIA supported projects; website link
4.0	April 2020	Board members; Committee members; NGOs implementing PIA supported projects; website link; Social Media volunteers
5.0	August 2025	Board members, Project Advisory Group members, NGOs implementing PIA supported projects, website
6.0	May 2026	Board members, Project Advisory Group members, NGOs implementing PIA supported projects, website

1. BACKGROUND

Partners in Aid (PIA) is committed to the rights of children and their protection from harm. It upholds the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), acknowledging its fundamental principle that children have their own indivisible rights.

PIA works directly with children through its Child Education Sponsorship Initiative and indirectly through our community-led development projects. Its Board members and project coordinators visit partner organisations and their projects in India, Sri Lanka, Fiji and the Philippines on a regular basis. During these visits, direct interaction with children may occur. Child sponsors also have indirect communication, through Board members, with children whose education they are sponsoring. It is therefore critical that PIA has clear and well-communicated strategies for ensuring that children and young people are protected from direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional, harm or abuse as a result of these activities, and that clear processes for responding to child harm, abuse or neglect, should it occur, are developed and followed.

1. Scope

PIA believes that child protection is both an organisational and individual responsibility. Everyone who shares the work of PIA, including Board members, project coordinators and other PIA volunteers or visitors accompanying PIA representatives to project sites (thereafter referred to as 'PIA representatives') and downstream partners, shares the responsibility to take every precaution to protect the children and families PIA assists and to adhere to the guidelines and expectations outlined in this policy. PIA itself as an organisation has the responsibility to ensure effective leadership in enabling the safeguarding of children. NGOs implementing PIA supported projects and anyone they might subcontract to assist with project implementation are also required to comply with this policy.

PIA is also responsible for ensuring that these Child Protection Policy and Procedures are communicated to all PIA representatives and to any NGO with which it collaborates.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Child Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children who are involved in PIA's initiatives. The intention is not just to fulfil all PIA's legal obligations, but to promote a culture of child safety within the organisation and its partners. This policy outlines systems and procedures for educating, preventing, reporting, and responding to child protection issues which may arise during our activities.

3. Guiding Principles

- 1.1 PIA has zero tolerance of abuse, bullying, sexual behaviour, transactional sexual behaviour or exploitation of any child or young person.
- 1.2 All PIA's child protection procedures will remain consistent with relevant legislation, including compliance with mandatory reporting responsibilities, privacy and employment law.
- 1.3 The safety and wellbeing of children and young people are prioritised by PIA. The best interest of the child and determination to ensure no actions instigated by PIA or its downstream partners do any harm to children shall always be the primary consideration in any PIA actions.
- 1.4 Reporting any incidences of possible harm to children within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incidence is mandatory, and PIA response in any situation involving reports or observations of possible harm will always be victim-survivor centered.
- 1.5 All PIA representatives and collaborating NGOs share in this duty of care to the children.
- 1.6 This duty of care extends to ensuring that all possible actions are taken to protect children and young people from any foreseeable harm. It extends to all children regardless of their background, abilities, or personal characteristics.
- 1.7 PIA and project partners welcome and include of all children regardless of their circumstances, abilities, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, displacement, and social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Wherever relevant and practical in particular projects, every effort will be made to empower children and enable their participation in project decision-making. Efforts must address barriers to participation, protection, reporting and support such as language, safety, discrimination and accessibility.
- 1.8 PIA will never knowingly engage – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses a risk to children.
- 1.9 All PIA representatives and project partners will be required to be aware of this policy and the importance of their adherence to the principles and guidelines it contains.

- 1.10 All PIA representatives must sign a copy of this policy, indicating that they have read and understood it, and agree to adhere to it in all aspects.
- 1.11 A set of professional boundaries to be observed when interacting with children in the course of project implementation is outlined in a PIA Code of Conduct. This Code helps protect everyone from misunderstandings and promotes transparency and accountability. It must be adhered to by any PIA visitors to project sites.
- 12.10 Our child safe practices include promoting our child safe commitments: for example, on our website, newsletters and any promotional material that may be produced.

5. Definitions

Child and young person: A child or young person is considered to be any person under the age of 18 years, unless another nation's laws recognise adulthood earlier.

Child Protection: Child protection is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children from being harmed or abused.

Child Abuse: Child abuse includes physical, sexual or emotional harm, neglect, bullying, child labour and domestic violence. It occurs across cultures and can be inflicted by men or women, on boys and girls.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent, or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification – regardless of the age of majority or age of consent.

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, moral or social-emotional development.

Child-Sex Tourism: ECPAT International defines child-sex tourism as:

"...the commercial sexual exploitation of children by men or women who travel from one place to another, usually from a richer country to one that is less developed, and there engage in sexual acts with children, defined as anyone aged under 18 years of age." (ECPAT International, 2006)

Bullying: Bullying is the deliberate and repetitive use of power by an individual or group, with an intent to injure either physically or emotionally.

Exposure to Domestic Violence: Domestic and family violence occurs when someone tries to control his/her partner or other family members in ways that intimidate or oppress them. Controlling behaviours can include threats, humiliation ('put downs'), emotional abuse, physical assault, sexual abuse, financial exploitation and social isolation, such as not allowing contact with family or friends (Australian Law Reform definition). Children are harmed by witnessing domestic violence and are also often directly harmed by the perpetrator.

Neglect: Neglect involves persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation, supervision, or care, to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

Victim-Survivor: People, including children who have had direct first-hand experience of abuse, including physical, sexual or emotional harm, neglect, bullying, child labour or domestic violence.

6. Procedures

6.1 Recruiting, Screening and Training of PIA Personnel

- 6.1.1 Should PIA advertise any Board or project coordinator position, the advertisement will now include a statement to the effect that PIA is a child-safe organisation
- 6.1.2 If the position advertised involves working with children, this will be made explicit in the advertisement.
- 6.1.3 Questions similar to the following examples will be included in the recruitment interview:
- What is your understanding of child protection?
 - Have you worked or volunteered in a position involving interaction with children? Were any of these children from a different cultural background to yourself?
 - Have you worked or volunteered in a position that involved interaction with vulnerable children? What was the nature of their vulnerabilities?
 - What strengths in working with children do you bring from your community, family or cultural background?
 - Please provide three examples of how to work safely with children.
 - What do you think makes a good community leader or role model for children and young people?
 - How would you involve children in their own protection in a development project?
- 6.1.4 To ensure PIA will never knowingly engage – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses a risk to children, any candidate for a Board position, person seeking to join the Project Advisory Group, or someone likely to be assisting with the implementation of projects or project-related activities that might involve children, will be required to submit:
- proof of identity,
 - a recent criminal record check, including an international criminal record check for each country where they have lived for 12 months or more in the past five years. (Police checks must be verified using original or certified documents and must be less than 12 months old).
 - an up-to-date Working with Children Check card,
 - two verbal referee checks, and
 - information about his or her dates and places of employment, education and any past and present involvement in international development and similar activities.
- Verbal reference checks will be carried out by a designated member of PIA.
- Once appointed, any Board candidate must immediately apply for a Director Identification Number if they do not already have one.
- No person that legal documentation or referee checks suggest might possibly be a risk to children will ever be involved with PIA's work.
- 6.1.5 As part of their induction, all new PIA Board members and project coordinators are now informed about what child protection involves, given a copy of this document, and asked to sign that they have read and agree to adhere to it.
- 6.1.6 Any person accompanying a PIA representative to a project who is not a PIA representative will

be given a copy of this document to sign that they have read and understood it and agree to adhere to it. They will also be required to provide a copy of an up-to-date Working with Children Check card.

- 6.1.7 Should PIA employ staff, including temporary staff, employment contracts will contain provision for suspension of any employee who comes under investigation for child sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment, and provision to dismiss his/her, if justified, after an investigation. A similar provision will be included in agreements made with any volunteer helping without a formal role in the organisation.

6.2 Screening and Training of their Personnel and Partners by Overseas Partners

- 6.2.1 All overseas partner organisations are required to carry out some screening of their personnel working on the project, depending on what is feasible in their country. The exact requirements are outlined in the partner organisations' own Child Protection Policies. Should personnel of overseas partner organisations be unable to access Working with Children Check cards, or police reports, etc., they should complete the Safeguarding Self-declaration Form in Appendix 3.
- 6.2.2 All overseas NGOs implementing a project supported by PIA are required to provide training to all personnel involved administratively with children or involved in implementing a project supported by PIA on their organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Working with Children. PIA's partner organisations should also include any downstream partners of their own in the training.
- 6.2.3 If a partner organisation employs staff, including temporary staff, employment contracts must contain provision for suspension of any employee who comes under investigation for child sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment, and provision to dismiss him/her, if justified, after an investigation.

6.3 Project Risk Assessment

- 6.3.1 Details of potential project risks to children and how these risks will be mitigated and managed are now an integral part of the design and intended implementation process outlined in any project proposal that is to be considered for funding by PIA.
- 6.3.2 All project proposals must have a completed DFAT Child Risk Assessment attached, which will be analysed and considered in the appraisal of the proposal, and appropriate steps to respond to the risk level identified outlined in the MOU.
- 6.3.3 As this is a relatively new requirement, all NGOs implementing projects funded prior to the inclusion of this in their project proposal must be asked to fill in a DFAT Child Risk assessment form which will be reviewed by PIA.

6.4 Child Safeguarding Initiatives Outlined in Memoranda of Understanding signed with Partner Organisation

- 6.4.1 As part of the MOU between PIA and partner organisations, the latter are now required:
- to ensure that there is no use of child labour on project sites,
 - if they do not already have one, to develop a contextually appropriate Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Working with Children that is compatible with this policy,
 - to conduct a training in the Child Safeguarding and Code of Conduct for both staff and any downstream partners that might be involved in any project supported by PIA (and to supply

- PIA with copies of signed attendance sheets, agendas, and copies of any training materials),
- to ensure that its Child Safeguarding Policy is accessible to any member of the public, including members of communities in which the project is being implemented, who might wish to see it,
 - to ensure that it has child exploitation, abuse of harassment notification/ incidence reporting procedures in place and information on how to report any incidence is publicly available and accessible to members of all communities in which the project is being implemented,
 - to have appropriate child safe recruitment and integrity screening processes in place for personnel to prevent any person from working with children who might pose an unacceptable risk to children. So far as possible, screening should include reference checks, recent police checks, working with children or vulnerable people checks, or locally appropriate alternatives, or where these are not feasible, a self-declaration. (Details of the screening that has taken place should be provided to PIA.),
 - to ensure that, where appropriate, a child risk assessment, compatible with DFAT child risk assessments, is undertaken annually to reduce the risk of any child being harmed because of project activities, and of risk management practices put in place to remove or reduce the risks,
 - to ensure that any employment contracts it might have contain provisions for suspension or transfer of any employee who is under investigation for child sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment and provision to dismiss any employee after an investigation confirms that the accusation is valid,
 - to ensure that all its personnel involved with the Project have read their organisation's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Working with Children and have agreed to abide by the boundaries that the Code sets for interaction with children, and
 - to ensure records are kept of any incidences of child sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

6.5 Monitoring of Overseas Projects

- 6.5.1 PIA representatives responsible for coordinating with the projects PIA supports will discuss the requirements of this policy and PIA's expectations with the implementing NGO during their regular project visits and ensure that minimum standards are being met. Evidence of adherence to these standards will be sought.
- 6.5.2 PIA project coordinators will be responsible, if they feel it necessary, for ensuring that child risk assessments be undertaken annually in every project which PIA is supporting to reduce the risk of any child being harmed as a result of project activities. Plans must be in place to remove or reduce any identified risks.
- 6.5.3 Monitoring of any risks to children, and the mitigation of these risks, is part of the template to be used during field visits to projects by project coordinators.
- 6.5.4 Project coordinators will also check what steps have been taken by the partner organisation to ensure that residents in their project areas are aware of how to report incidences of child abuse and that this can be done in confidence.

6.6 Sponsorship Guidelines

- 6.6.1 PIA acknowledges that child sponsorship initiatives, which facilitate relationships between adult sponsors and children in receipt of sponsorship, present a potential risk in terms of child protection. We acknowledge that harm can occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 6.6.2 PIA will ensure that before it sends any correspondence from sponsors to children or young

people, it will be vetted by a Board member who is aware of child protection practices.

- 6.6.3 PIA will not facilitate any visits of sponsors to sponsored children, and sponsors cannot invite sponsored children to visit them.
- 6.6.4 PIA Board members or representatives will be required to demonstrate their current understanding of child protection procedures, this policy and commitment to the Code of Conduct prior to overseas project visits. Volunteers who visit projects supported by PIA will need to sign the Code of Conduct for Working with Children and have a Working with Children card.
- 6.6.5 Board members who are also child sponsors have a particular responsibility when visiting projects where they may encounter their sponsored children. They must be clear in all their communications and actions that they are visiting as a Board member, not a sponsor, they should not identify themselves as a sponsor to the children, and they must ensure that they adhere to all the guidelines in this policy.
- 6.6.6 No provision is made for sponsors to send personal gifts to their sponsored children.
- 6.6.7 Reports from the NGOs responsible for managing the sponsorship scheme, from the sponsored children, from their families or from their schools will be vetted by a trained Board member before being forwarded to the sponsor. Care will be taken to ensure that no means of contacting the child, other than through PIA, is made known to the sponsor.

6.7 Use of Children's Images

- 6.7.1 PIA uses images of children when communicating with adult sponsors about their sponsored child or young person. It also occasionally uses images of children and young people in newsletters and other publications. PIA ensures that the following procedures are adopted with respect to photographing children and the use of children's images:
- Images of children must portray them as resilient, capable and not weak or vulnerable.
 - Images should never show children naked or in a sexualised manner.
 - Images will not identify the location of children or any other information which might enable others to locate and contact them.
 - When reproducing personal images, local traditions or restrictions on doing so must be observed.
 - If publishing or sending images of children electronically, the images and attached labels must never provide any information or detail which might enable anyone to locate, identify or contact them.
 - No project-related photos of children should be kept on personal computers, mobile phones or other technical devices.

6.8 Role of Volunteers

- 6.8.1 Volunteers sometimes assist with the administration of the sponsorship program in Australia and occasionally visit the children and young people in their country of residence. All volunteers working on child sponsorship programs in Australia or visiting projects in-country will be screened by Board members, be required to understand, agree to, and sign the Code of Conduct for Working with Children, as well as be required to obtain a Working with Children card.

6.8.2 They will be provided with this policy document and a volunteer position description and will be briefed by a Board member on their role and responsibilities in relation to child protection.

7 Policies and procedures regarding reporting and investigating child abuse and ensuring awareness of these policies

7.1 Ensuring Awareness of PIA Child Protection Policies and Procedures

- 7.1.1 A link to this policy, including on how to report suspected child abuse is available on PIA's webpage. The PIA Newsletter also indicates how to make a general complaint.
- 7.1.2 PIA also works with its partner organisations to help ensure that they have Child Protection Policies compatible with DFAT requirements, and that they train relevant staff and anyone involved in implementing projects supported by PIA. They are also encouraged; in any one or more project meetings, to discuss – in accessible and culturally appropriate ways – the do's and don't with respect to children, the fact that child abuse is never acceptable, and how it can be reported safely without threat of retaliation and what will happen if child abuse is reported.
- 7.1.3 As a minimum, PIA requests that its partner organisations display in commonly frequented places in all communities involved in any project supported by PIA, an easily readable and culturally appropriate notice in local language/s about how and where to report child neglect, abuse or exploitation.

7.2 Reporting child abuse

7.2.1 The following must be reported and acted upon immediately:

- any observation, allegation or suspicion that a child is being or has been abused, physically, sexually or emotionally, or is being neglected,
- any report by a child which suggest they have been or are being abused, exploited or neglected, and
- any observation or allegation or suspicion that an adult is or maybe exploiting, abusing, or neglecting a child. (An incident reporting form is provided in Appendix 2).
- any breach of PIA's Child Protection Policy including its Code of Conduct for Working with Children or Code of Conduct for Sub-contractors or Grantees.

7.2.2 PIA acknowledges that child abuse and neglect reporting procedures vary between countries and that those which apply in Australia may not apply in the countries where it works. However, the guiding principles governing PIA's and its partner organisation's response to a child abuse incidence will be truthfulness, fairness, transparency and professionalism.

7.2.3 Any PIA or partner organisation personnel who have concerns about a child's safety or well-being or about unacceptable behaviour to a child must not only feel obligated to report this but eel they can do this without any fear of retribution from their employer.

7.2.4 All necessary steps must also be taken to protect anyone reporting suspected child abuse, exploitation or neglect, or breach of PIA's Code of Conduct, from retaliation or stigmatisation by members of their community. Not only the person reporting the abuse, but anyone cooperating with a subsequent investigation may also need to be protected from retaliation. This means that they must all feel confident that if they report a suspected incidence of child abuse, or are

involved in an investigation, their doing so will remain confidential if they wish, and their privacy will be respected.

- 7.2.5 Appendix 2 provides a form for notifying any observed or reported incidence/s of child abuse. All partner organisations have a copy of the form for reporting incidences of child abuse that come to their notice, and are asked to keep a register of any such reports and the nature and outcome of its investigation

7.3 Investigating Child Abuse

- 7.3.1 If the abuse or neglect is occurring in Australia or the perpetrator is acting in Australia, all incidents should be reported to the Chair of PIA.

Contact details for reporting to PIA are as follows:

Phone: +61 429 929 063 Email: info@partnersinaid.org.au

- 7.3.2 The Chair in conjunction with the Board will investigate the complaint, or, if more appropriate, the Chair will pass this report on directly to the police or the state child protection authority.
- 7.3.3 if abuse or neglect occurs overseas and is observed during an in-country visit, it should be reported to the CEO of the NGO implementing the project. The Chair of PIA should be informed simultaneously. If it is not possible to report it to the relevant Partner Organisation, or if no action is taken, again, this should be made known to the Chair of the PIA Board, and, where appropriate, it should also be reported to the police.
- 7.3.4 Additional obligations under Australian and overseas law may apply to reporting incidents of child harm to law enforcement. Australians should be aware of their obligations to report under appropriate Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation, including its extraterritorial application, and if necessary, seek independent legal advice about their responsibilities.
- 7.3.5 Regardless of where it occurs, if there is a suspicion of child sex exploitation, pornography, sex tourism or similar being perpetuated by an Australian citizen, it should be reported to the Australian Federal Police.

7.4 Response to Investigation of child abuse

- 7.4.1 In Australia, depending on the severity of the abuse reported, an initial investigation will be carried out by the Chair or a person nominated by the PIA Board. This must follow strict confidentiality protocols, with Information being shared strictly on an 'need-to-know' basis. Depending on the outcome of this initial investigation, the PIA Board may pass the report of abuse to the police or child protection authority, who will conduct an enquiry and take appropriate action.
- 7.4.2 If the incident involves a member, sponsor, volunteer or someone connected to PIA, the Board will act appropriately to the outcome of the Board or the legal authority's investigation. This may involve ceasing membership or sponsorship of the person, taking some other corrective action or no action, depending on the outcome of the investigation.
- 7.4.3 Overseas, the CEO of the NGO implementing the project and the Board Chair of PIA will liaise over the appropriate course of action. This must include an investigation, steps to protect the child, appropriate reporting to relevant authorities in both countries, and appropriate action in-country to minimise the likelihood of the incident occurring again. Failure to resolve the issue, or the likelihood of its recurrence may lead to termination of the relationship with the NGO.

7.4.4 A register of any incidents reported will be maintained by PIA.

7.5 Ensuring fairness to all throughout an investigation

7.5.1 All incidents or reports will be taken seriously by PIA and/or its partner organisation and be acted upon immediately while respecting the rights of both the alleged victim and the alleged offender. All actions taken must be in the best interests of the child or young person.

(The following section is extracted from DFAT's April 2026 publication 'Child and Adult Safeguarding Implementation Handbook for Staff and Partners')

Protecting the Victim

7.5.2 In event of a report of an alleged incident of child abuse, PIA will adopt the following practices to prioritise the safety and choice of the victim, to avoid blame, and to maintain confidentiality, at all times responding with dignity, flexibility, and care.

Prioritise the physical and psychological safety of the victim

- Ask what helps them feel safe and comfortable.
- Offer a support person.
- Check in before, during and after conversations.
- Look for signs of distress, allow breaks and go at their pace.
- Minimise repeated retelling of the abuse.
- Always protect privacy and confidentiality to reduce the risk of harm retaliation and stigmatisation to the victim.

Build the victim's trust and be transparent

- Explain what will happen next and why.
- Be clear about how information will be used, stored or shared.
- Communicate gently, respectfully, and without judgment.
- Seek **informed consent** before collecting or sharing information.

Allow choice and flexibility

- Let the victim decide how to proceed and be flexible to adapt.
- Support their choices, even if they change their mind.
- Respect that it might take time for victim-survivors to decide on a course of action.
- Keep them informed throughout the process.

Practise collaboration and empowerment

- Respond *with* the victim-survivor, not on their behalf (don't take over).
- Use clear, accessible language (interpreters if needed).
- Acknowledge the victims' strengths and resilience.
- Explain risks, options, processes and possible outcomes early in the investigation.

Ensure confidentiality

- Share information only with those who need to know.
- Store information securely.
- Avoid public or insecure discussions.
- Be careful of email chains or correspondence that could expose sensitive details.
- Avoid copying multiple people into emails.

- Only inform the alleged perpetrator with consent and safety planning in place.

If feasible, PIA will seek out support that can be offered, regardless of whether the victim-survivor chooses to take part in an investigation. This may include:

- specialist gender-based violence services
- medical or psychological care
- practical or socioeconomic support.

Fairness to an alleged perpetrator subject to an investigation

75.3 PIA will ensure that alleged perpetrators who are the subject of an investigation are treated with professionalism, impartiality and confidentiality. Investigation procedures should include:

- decisions based on factual evidence
- written notification to the individual under investigation, including the general nature of the allegations
- an opportunity for the individual to respond to allegations and present relevant information or supporting evidence
- confidential handling of all information related to the investigation, noting that anonymity may not be possible if the allegation is substantiated
- access to interview transcripts for review and correction
- an option for the alleged perpetrator to have a support person or interpreter present during interviews.
- ensure objectivity and impartiality by ensuring:
 - all parties are treated fairly
 - there are no conflicts of interest
 - a facts-based approach.
- ensure independence and non-interference, for example by ensuring:
 - independent (preferably external to the organisation) investigators
 - no management or board interference.
- ensure investigation procedures include:
 - decisions based on factual evidence
 - written notification to the individual under investigation, including the general nature of the allegations
 - an opportunity for the individual to respond to allegations and present relevant information or supporting evidence
 - confidential handling of all information related to the investigation, noting that anonymity may not be possible if the allegation is substantiated
 - access to interview transcripts for review and correction
 - the option for the alleged perpetrator to have a support person or interpreter present during interviews.

8 Educating the Organisation

Board members are recommended to take up opportunities for professional development in child protection through organisations such as ACFID and encouraged to share their learning with the Board and volunteer base.

9. Review

The policy and the Code of Conduct for Working with Children will be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier if the need arises, paying particular reference to any potential risks to child safety observed when monitoring and evaluating projects.

10. References

ACFID Code of Conduct: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/files/>

AusAID Child Protection Policy:

http://www.usaid.gov/publications/pubout.cfm?Id=7954_7703_6074_4255_4227

Australian Government, Australian Law Reform Commission.

<http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/family-violence-and-commonwealth-laws%E2%80%94law/definition-family-violence>

Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

DFAT Child and Adult Safeguarding Implementation Handbook for Staff and Partners, April 2026:

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/child-and-adult-safeguards-implementation-handbook>

DFAT Child Protection, September 2025: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/child-protection-policy>

APPENDIX 1



Partners in Aid

AUSTRALIA

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

PIA works both directly and indirectly with children through our Child Education Sponsorship initiative and our general project activities. Board members and project coordinators visit projects in India, Sri Lanka Fiji and the Philippines on a regular basis. During these visits, direct interaction with children often occurs. Board members and other volunteers may also have indirect contact with children through administrative work on the child sponsorship initiative, and through handling images while preparing and maintaining the website, social media and other communications.

PIA's commitment to child protection is articulated in its Child Safeguarding Policy. To assist the implementation of this policy, this Code of Conduct for Working with Children has been developed. It must be understood and agreed to by all PIA representatives who have any connection with children associated with PIA activities. Strict adherence to the Code is required in all contact, whether direct or indirect, with these children. This will also help to prevent misunderstandings and to protect personnel from false or unfair allegations.

In the presence of children, PIA representatives must always behave in a manner which is consistent with PIA core values of integrity, dignity and effectiveness and should understand their responsibilities in terms of duty of care.

1. General Principles

1.1 Maintaining Boundaries

- 1.1.1 PIA representatives should practice awareness of their own behaviour and how it may be perceived by others. They are responsible for establishing and maintaining clear adult/child boundaries between themselves and children with whom they have contact. These boundaries serve to communicate what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Observing them also helps to prevent misunderstandings and to protect personnel from false or unfair allegations.

1.2 Child Labour

- 1.2.1 No child labour, as defined by the recipient country's laws, will be used during any project implementation.
- 1.2.2 Care must be taken to ensure that no child is taken out of school to work on project activities.

1.3 Communication with Children

- 1.3.1 In communication with children, PIA representatives will:
 - 1.3.1.1 always treat them with respect and dignity,
 - 1.3.1.2 never say or do anything inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory,

- 1.3.1.3 never demonstrate favouritism towards some children over others,
- 1.3.1.4 be positive and encouraging,
- 1.3.1.5 never say or do anything that could be perceived as humiliating, belittling or degrading;
- 1.3.1.6 learn, understand and respect cultural sensitivities,
- 1.3.1.7 not bring or provide gifts for individual children, and
- 1.3.1.8 ensure that the words they use in the presence of children are appropriate for children to hear.

1.4 Contact with children

- 1.4.1 Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of any child is specifically prohibited.
- 1.4.2 Physical contact with children should be avoided. In particular, displays of affection such as inappropriate holding, kissing, cuddling, or punitive actions such as smacking.
- 1.4.3 Sexual conduct towards children is unacceptable and illegal and will be referred to the authorities in Australia where relevant, and in the country where it occurs.
- 1.4.4 Visiting PIA representatives and visitors linked in any way to PIA should not be alone with a child and should not take a child to their hotel, home, or hostel. They should not share a room, a bed or other sleeping arrangements with children.
- 1.4.5 Partner organisations should have similar restrictions where relevant and appropriate to safeguard the children with whom they interact in the course of project implementation.
- 1.4.6 Children's dignity and privacy must be respected. Assisting a child with activities such as bathing, dressing and toileting should not be undertaken where the child is capable of these activities.
- 1.4.7 No illicit drugs or alcohol will be consumed in the presence children, nor provided to children in any context.

1.5 Photography

- 1.5.1 Images of children can only be reproduced or published with their informed permission and that of their family.
- 1.5.2 Photos of children must portray them as resilient, capable and not weak or vulnerable.
- 1.5.3 Images should never show children naked or in a sexualised manner.
- 1.5.4 Images will not identify the location of children or any other information which might enable others to locate and contact them.
- 1.5.5 When reproducing personal images, local traditions or restrictions on doing so must be observed.
- 1.5.6 If publishing or sending images of children electronically, the images and attached labels must never provide any information or detail which might enable anyone to locate, identify or contact them.
- 1.5.7 No project-related photos of children should be kept on personal computers, mobile phones or other technical devices.

1.6 Child Sponsorship

- 1.6.1 Child sponsors in general will not have direct contact with child beneficiaries of the program.

Communication between sponsors and children and their families is conducted through the Board member responsible for the program. This means that letters from sponsors to children, from children to sponsors and reports from children's schools to sponsors are vetted by the Board member.

- 1.6.2 Any inappropriate letters or photos from sponsors will not be sent to the child. Any communication from children to sponsors may lead to harm to the child or miscommunication will not be sent on to sponsors.
- 1.6.3. Direct contact details, or information which could lead to locating a child directly, including via the internet or social media, will not be made available to sponsors and no newsletter articles, photos or other media about sponsored children will identify their location.
- 1.6.4. Sponsors are discouraged from visiting sponsored children. In the case where a Board member or volunteer who sponsors a child also visits a project where they may contact that child, the Child Safeguarding Policy should be adhered to, including a briefing prior to travel.

1.7 Recording Any Incidence

- 1.7.1 Any incident of child harm or abuse involving a Board member, volunteer or supporter must be documented giving the time and place of the event, and people involved, to be tabled at the next Board meeting for follow-up action. The procedure for responding to such incidents is outlined in the Policy above.

Appendix 2**Child Incident Notification**

1. Names(s) of person reporting and contact details
<input type="checkbox"/> Victim-survivor <input type="checkbox"/> Partner organisation (name of organisation) <input type="checkbox"/> Community member <input type="checkbox"/> DFAT staff
Name:
Telephone:
Email:

2. Type of Allegation	
Please circle most appropriate description of alleged incident: Sexual Abuse\Sexual Misconduct Physical Abuse Psychological Abuse Emotional Abuse Neglect Other	Further details if known (Date\location\when report was received): Other relevant details: (For example implements used, vulnerability, or disability factors):

3. Details of Person(s) against whom the allegation has been made	
Family Name:	
Given Name:	
Sex:	
Date of birth:	
Nationality:	
Contact details:	
Position: (If applicable)	
4. Details of Victim(s)	
Family Name:	
Given Name:	
Sex:	
Date of birth:	
Nationality:	

Contact details:	
Age of child at time of alleged incident:	
Have any injuries been observed or reported? <i>(If more space is needed, please utilise Section 8)</i>	
5. Further Details	
Is the victim still in danger of abuse or neglect?	
Are local police or other local authority aware of the incident\allegation?	
What other authorities have been informed?	
6. Any other pertinent information for initial assessment	

Appendix 3**Safeguarding Self-declaration Form**

(For use by NGO members or others involved in any way in project implementation on site or in any premises of the NGO who are unable to access a Working with Children Check or a Police Report)

Please answer the following questions. If you answer 'yes' to any, we will speak with you further to find out more information.

1. Have you ever been charged with a criminal offence relating to domestic violence or child abuse or exploitation or neglect?

Yes

No

If yes: Please add a comment if you wish:

2. Have you ever been accused of violence towards a woman or child?

Yes

No

If yes: Please add a comment if you wish

3. Have you ever breached a Code of Conduct in a previous place of employment or involvement with an NGO?

Yes

No

If yes: Please add a comment if you wish

4. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action in a previous place of employment?

Yes

No

If yes: Please add a comment if you wish.

Signature :

Date:

Print name:

Appendix 4

Code of Conduct for any PIA Sub-contractors or Grantees

[insert name of company or individual]:

- will not discriminate against any person based on sex, age, ethnicity, race. Sexual orientation, gender identity religion or any other characteristic if they have the skills /experience to perform the task/s they are required to perform,
- will not sexually harass abuse or exploit any person we engage through our relationship with PIA,
- will not exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex with anyone involved in our relationship with PIA,
- will refrain from behaviour, displaying signs or using language that is abuse, sexually provocative or offensive, or culturally inappropriate, and
- will not require a child to perform any child labour.

I understand that any breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to a termination of this relationship with PIA.

Signed:

Date:

Printed Name: