

# INF Australia CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Version	9	Developed:	2007
Owner:	CEO	Latest Revision	April 2019
Users:	All – Board, Staff, Volunteers	Scheduled review date	April 2021

THIS POLICY COMPLIES WITH: DFAT CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT

RELATED INF AUSTRALIA POLICIES: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, Grievance and Discipline Policy, Whistleblower Policy, Complaints Handling Policy

RELATED INF AUSTRALIA PRACTICE DOCUMENTS: Child Protection Practice, Child Protection and Safeguarding Code of Conduct, Child Protection Risk Assessment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The abuse, neglect and exploitation of children is not tolerated by INF Australia. We take seriously our responsibility to promote child safe practices and protect children from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation in any form. We will take positive action to prevent child abusers becoming involved with INFA in any way and take stringent measures against any INFA Staff and/or Associate (including volunteers, contractors or participants in INFA-organised trips, treks, conferences or other activities) who abuses or exploits a child.

This policy also applies to the prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation of other vulnerable people such as the elderly, or those with physical or mental disabilities.

For the purposes of this policy, children are defined as those under 18 year of age.

INFA does not normally work specifically with children, but recognises that

- children in Nepal are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. INFA has a duty to ensure that:
  - staff, volunteer workers and participants in INFA vision trips or treks sent to Nepal by INFA do not pose a risk to children in that country, and that our projects are carried out in the best interests of children;
  - we are able to influence our partner organisations to reduce the risk of child exploitation and abuse (either through their work or due to the context in which they work);
- staff and volunteers may come into contact with children while working in INFA office in Australia, while attending speaking engagements and events, or at INFA conferences, and that we share the responsibility for preventing them from being exploited or abused.

This policy describes how INFA seeks to minimise the risk of child exploitation by effective recruitment screening, development approaches, risk assessment and monitoring; how concerns about possible abuse or exploitation will be dealt with; and includes a Code of Conduct for all Directors, Staff and Volunteers connected with INF Australia.

This also applies to Partners of INFA, both in Australia and abroad. It recognises that partner organisations will have their own policies for identifying and dealing with child protection. INFA will work with them to establish and maintain robust systems and processes (including training, risk assessment and minimisation, reporting and responding) for protecting children and vulnerable persons.

## 1.1 DEFINITIONS

Child exploitation, neglect and abuse may include all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity, which impacts a child in a way that is not in their best interest. This may include forms of physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, spiritual abuse, sexual abuse, economic exploitation or sexual exploitation, including making, accessing or possessing child pornography. It is particularly relevant in the context of relationships of responsibility, trust and power – such as teacher/student, parent/child, carer/child, medical practitioner/patient.

## 2. POLICY

### 2.1 WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS SUSPICION OF ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

Any disclosure, concern or allegation from a child, community member, staff or associate regarding the safety, abuse or exploitation of a child (this includes actual, suspected, or risk of abuse or harm to a child), any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by an INF staff, volunteer or other associate that breaches the INFA Code of Conduct for Working with Children, any suspicion of abuse or exploitation must be reported immediately to the relevant authorities and to [childprotection@au.inf.org](mailto:childprotection@au.inf.org), which forwards to the INF Australia CEO and the INF Australia Chairperson. In the event of a suspicion being reported, the INF Australia CEO will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate authorities are involved. If the suspicions involve the INF Australia CEO, it should be reported directly to INF Australia's Chairperson ([chair@au.inf.org](mailto:chair@au.inf.org)).

INF Australia CEO has responsibility for:

- Ensuring that all people associated with INF Australia, including volunteers and administrative staff, are aware of the INF Australia Child Protection Policy and sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all INF Australia's activities are carried out in a way that minimises potential harm to children and ensures their privacy and dignity;
- Co-ordinating action in cases of suspected child abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- Immediately notifying the INF Australia Chair, the Australian Police and Social Services and the donor partner (DFAT) of any incident or allegation and, if appropriate, the Nepal Police.

### 2.2 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

Allegations of Child abuse, neglect and exploitation will be investigated under INF Australia's Complaints Policy.

### 2.3 RECRUITMENT

INF Australia will screen all staff and volunteers to minimise the risk to children and will not work with anyone who poses an unacceptable risk to children. All staff and volunteers will be required to understand this policy and sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

A full list of the checks that will be carried out during recruitment can be found in INF Australia's Child Protection Practice document, but will include verbal referee checks, the use of behavioural questions during interview, a requirement for disclosure of any offenses relating to abuse or exploitation, and criminal records checks which include country of residence and citizenship.

Where INF Australia staff or volunteers have contact with children, INF Australia will arrange for training in child protection policy and protocols.

## 2.4 PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

INF Australia recognises that children in Nepal are especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

- When travelling overseas, INF Australia personnel and associates are expected to abide by standards of behaviour that are acceptable in Australia.
- Staff, volunteers and associates should not take pictures or moving images of children that are exploitative or in any way inappropriate. INF Australia will not use such images.
- Staff, volunteers and associates should not give gifts to children without the permission of parents (or guardians) and must never give drugs or alcohol to children.
- INF Australia requires that all partner organisations have a child protection policy that is actively implemented. Where new partners do not initially have a child protection policy, INF Australia will work with them to develop one.
- When considering a new funding proposal or partnership, or reviewing an existing agreement, INF Australia will consider the potential risk to children directly and indirectly associated with the project or partner.

## 2.5 RISK ASSESSMENT

INF Australia will undertake child protection risk assessments in all its project activities that will identify risks, classify any high risk activities and document steps being taken to reduce these risks.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This policy is a commitment by INF Australia to deal with child abuse, neglect and exploitation and the perpetrators of it seriously, fairly and in the best interests of the child. It relies on INF Australia Directors, Staff, Volunteers and everyone associated with the organisation being observant of the children in their care and raising ANY concern, no matter how minor with the appropriate authority.

This policy will be distributed to all staff and volunteers of INF Australia, as well as our partners, and ongoing training and support will be offered for implementation of this policy.

## INF AUSTRALIA CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

I, [ ], acknowledge that I have read and understood INF Australia's Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment policies and agree that while representing INF Australia, I must:

- treat children and vulnerable adults with respect regardless of race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status;
- not use language or behaviour towards children or vulnerable adults that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts;
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children or vulnerable adults;
- not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible;
- use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or vulnerable adults or to access child pornography through any medium;
- not use physical punishment on children, avoiding all forms of physical contact as far as possible;
- not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- not give gifts to children without the permission of parents or carers, and never give drugs or alcohol to children or vulnerable adults;
- comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour;
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation or abuse, or other sexual exploitation and abuse, and non-compliance with this policy in accordance with appropriate procedures;
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with INF Australia that relate to sexual exploitation and abuse.

**When photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult or using their images for work-related purposes, I must:**

- assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult;
- obtain informed consent from the child or vulnerable adult and parent or guardian of the child/carer of the vulnerable adult before photographing or filming a child or vulnerable adult. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used;
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children and vulnerable adults in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Subjects should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child or vulnerable adult when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form;

- I understand that the onus is on me, as a person associated with INF Australia, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child exploitation and abuse or any form of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## REVISION HISTORY

Date	No	Summary of Changes	Section/s that changed	Authorised by:
Feb 2017	4	Inclusion of DFAT guidance	2.1 CoC: strengthen clause on informed consent	INFA Board
Mar 2017	5	Inclusion of ACFID and DFAT guidance		INFA Board
Nov 2017	6	Changes, additions	Dot points in CoC	INFA Board
Dec 2018	7	Revised Reference to drugs and alcohol Revised definition of child abuse, neglect and exploitation Included vulnerable people in scope of policy Updated references to “child abuse, neglect and exploitation”	2.4 and CoC 1.1 1 Throughout	INFA Board
Apr 2019	8	Included link to PSEAH policy Included references to “other vulnerable people” Extended definition of associates to explicitly include participants in “INFA-organised trips, treks, conferences and activities” Changed name of Code of Conduct to “INFA Child Protection & <i>Safeguarding</i> Code of Conduct” Added references to PSEAH policy and to “vulnerable adults”	Section 1 Section 1 Code of Conduct Code of Conduct	INFA Board
Jul 2019	9	New child protection email details included	2.1	CEO