

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Last updated 12 May 2021

## Key Points

We have a duty of care to protect children.

Caritas Australia has zero tolerance of exploitation or abuse.

If you know or suspect anything, it is your responsibility to speak up.

## 1. Why this policy exists

At Caritas Australia (CA), we are committed to protecting children from all forms of exploitation or abuse when delivering our aid and development activities both overseas and within Australia. CA will not tolerate any form of child abuse or exploitation. We take our duty of care towards children very seriously.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment which promotes our core values and prevents abuse and exploitation of all people. Our personnel are expected to uphold the dignity of all people with whom they come into contact by ensuring their personal and professional conduct is of the highest standards at all times. They are equally expected to serve with integrity and recognise that all children (regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, indigeneity, disability, age, displacement, caste, gender, gender identity, sexuality, sexual orientation, poverty, class or socio-economic status) have equal rights to protection from abuse or exploitation.

This policy is part of our Safeguarding Framework and is closely aligned to our Code of Conduct and Professional Behaviour Standards, our Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy and our Speaking Up Policy.

The Purpose of the policy is to:

- a) Outline CA's commitment and approach to the protection of children and how we address concerns if they arise.
- b) Provide clear guidance to all our personnel and partners, on our commitments and expectations relating to child protection, including expectations of behaviour and mandatory obligations to report concerns.
- c) Ensure we meet our legal obligations in Australia and overseas in respect to child protection.
- d) Ensure we meet and align with good practice in the aid and development sector, including the following guidance:
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Policy
  - Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct
  - Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
  - Caritas Internationalis: Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Staff; Child and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy

## 2. This policy applies to

This policy applies to all CA personnel (see definition in Section 3). This policy and its obligations extend to any visitors to CA premises, programs or activities within Australia and internationally.

CA program partners, and their downstream partners, are required to adhere to this policy through demonstrated alignment within their own policies and procedures. If required, program partners can adapt this or a more generic safeguarding policy (provided by CA) while developing or strengthening their policies (see section 5.4 below).

## 3. Definitions used in this policy

Below is a partial list of definitions. A comprehensive list of definitions used in this policy can be found in Appendix 1.

When we use ...	we mean ...
child	Any person under 18 years of age, regardless of whether a nation's laws or customs recognise adulthood earlier.
personnel	Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of CA including Australian-based employees, in-country employees, Board of Directors, Diocesan Directors, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors and consultants.
program partners	Individuals or organisations that Caritas Australia works with, accompanies and supports to deliver humanitarian and development programs or activities.
downstream partners	Organisations, contractors or others engaged by our partners to deliver development and or humanitarian programs or activities.
PSEAH	Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
we, us, our	Refers to Caritas Australia.

## 4. Guiding Principles

This policy is guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the following specific principles:

### 4.1 Child-centred approach

We promote and protect the interests of the child at all times and respect the dignity of each person. We engage with children so that their voices can be heard and empower them to engage with decisions that impact them and to realise their full potential.

### 4.2 Zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation

We are committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that all children with whom we work (both in Australia and overseas) are provided a safe environment at all times.

### 4.3 Mandatory reporting

It is mandatory for all our personnel and partners to report any breach of this policy including any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of exploitation or abuse against a child. We have zero tolerance of inaction; reports must be made and immediately responded to.

#### **4.4 Shared responsibility**

We view the protection of children as a shared responsibility between CA, our partners and the communities in which we work. We will work to embed strong practices by accompanying and supporting partners and communities to do the same.

### **5. Policy Commitments**

CA endeavours to create the safest possible environment for children that come into contact with us and with our partners through the course of our work. We do this by implementing the following practices.

#### **5.1 Professional Behaviour Standards**

5.1.1 We ensure all personnel and partners understand and adhere to Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable People (Appendix 2).

#### **5.2 Safe Programming and Active Risk Management**

5.2.1 We commit to taking all necessary steps to ensure no harm (including abuse or exploitation of children) takes place during delivery of our programs and activities.

5.2.2 We commit to promoting safe programming by actively including risk management as an ongoing part of all our, and our partners, work by:

- Conducting thorough risk assessments of all programs and activities prior to commencement to identify risks and develop mitigation strategies to reduce and manage risks to children. We align risk assessments to good safeguarding standards and to our policy commitments.
- Conducting partner checks to ensure policies and procedures are in place and identifying safeguarding capacity building activities to support partners and program delivery.
- Monitoring risks to ensure assessment-identified risks are reviewed, emerging risks are incorporated and that mitigation strategies put in place are being implemented and are effective through the program cycle.
- Ensuring that partners and projects have strong feedback and complaints mechanisms so that any concerns can be reported and acted upon.

5.2.3 We acknowledge that during humanitarian emergencies, children are at a higher level of risk, and manage these risks appropriately.

#### **5.3 Training for our Personnel and Partners**

5.3.1 We commit to building knowledge, understanding and awareness of child protection and abuse as well as how to reduce risk and create safe environments for children. Training will include safeguarding policy obligations including reporting requirements and processes, and be provided to:

- Personnel will be required to participate in safeguarding training as part of their induction, regular ongoing refresher training and targeted training depending on their role or contact with children.
- Visitors to our premises, programs or activities will be provided with a relevant safeguarding induction, including compliance obligations where required, prior to any visit taking place.

- Program partners will be provided with Safeguarding training and capacity building. We will work with partners to cascade safeguarding requirements to their downstream partners.

#### **5.4 Working in partnership**

5.4.1 We ensure processes are in place to determine a partner's status as a child safe organisation by including safeguarding (including child protection) in CA's partner appraisal process.

5.4.2 We ensure our partner's policies and procedures align with CA's Child Protection Policy and Professional Behaviour Standards. In cases where partners do not have the required documents, they must adapt the CA policies or generic versions (provided by CA) while developing or strengthening their own. This is reflected in partners agreements and contracts.

5.4.3 We work with partners to build their capacity and ensure they meet the standards required to protect children through our accompaniment and training mechanisms. This includes socialising policies, procedures and professional behaviour standards and expectations for partners to extend these safeguarding expectations to their downstream partners and the communities in which they work.

#### **5.5 Recruitment and Employment Practices**

5.5.1 We are committed to child safe recruitment and employment practices, particularly for personnel who will be in direct or indirect contact with children.

5.5.2 We implement robust, child-safe procedures and practices when recruiting and screening including:

- Acknowledging in job advertisements and role descriptions our commitment to safeguarding
- Verbal referee checks and interview questions about safeguarding
- Criminal history checks for all personnel (see CA's Screening Check Procedure)
- Specific checks for roles involving contact with children, and additional checks for roles that involve working directly with children (see CA's Screening Check Procedure)

5.5.3 We will not knowingly engage any personnel to be in direct or indirect contact with children or access communities whom we work with if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

5.5.4 In our employment contracts we include relevant clauses about safeguarding expectations of personnel. Contracts will include provisions for suspension or transfer to other duties while personnel are under investigation and consequences if it is found that they have breached this Policy or our Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children, including provisions for dismissal.

5.5.5 We ensure all new employees s undergo induction and training on safeguarding including child protection.

5.5.6 Compliance with the policy is mandatory for all personnel. We ensure commitment to and compliance with the Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children, which outlines expected behaviours and obligations, as part of regular personnel performance management.

#### **5.6 Using Children's Images and Stories**

5.6.1 CA will at all times portray children with dignity and respect and should not in any way endanger or stigmatise the people that we include in images. This commitment is further reflected in our Professional Behaviour Standards (Appendix 2) and our Communication policy, procedures and guidelines.

5.6.2 We ensure appropriate procedures, protocols and processes are in place for ethical collection, storage and use of children's stories, photos, videos and images. This includes gaining informed consent prior to taking images and managing the Visual Images and Stories Procedure identifying information relating to children to keep them safe.

## **5.7 Reporting and Responding**

Some CA employees are mandatory reporters under Australian law. Positions that have mandatory reporting responsibilities will have this reflected in the role description. Notwithstanding, under this policy:

5.7.1 It is mandatory for all CA personnel to immediately report any alleged, witnessed or suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation or policy non-compliance. Failure to report may put the victim and CA at risk and is a breach of this Policy and our Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults.

5.7.2 In line with CA's Speaking Up Policy and Procedure for Complaints Handling Procedure, and to support and enable reporting and effective response to reports, CA will:

- Maintain appropriate, accessible and safe procedures and mechanisms for reporting of concerns, suspicions or allegations of exploitation and abuse of children, and/or breaches of this Policy or the Professional Behaviour Standards
- How to make a report and key contact points are summarised in Appendix 3
- DFAT reporting requirements are summarised in Appendix 4
- Information on How to Respond to Disclosure and Suspected Abuse is summarised in Appendix 5
- Our Child Protection Incident Reporting Form is in Appendix 6
- Always immediately act upon and escalate reports that disclose or suspect child abuse or exploitation, making the welfare of children the paramount consideration. Escalation will include internal obligations, and may include external reporting obligations to stakeholders (such as DFAT), in line with our documented procedure
- If the complaint or report relates to a CAN DO project, CA will follow the CAN DO Standard Operating Procedures for PSEAH and Child Safeguarding

5.7.3 When working with partners and across CA's programs we will:

- Ensure that partners, communities and people we work with are proactively informed about CA's commitments to protect children and child-friendly reporting procedures in place for raising any concerns relating to child protection.
- Support partners develop child protection reporting procedures that meet social, cultural, programmatic and local contexts, as part of our accompaniment and capacity building initiatives.

5.7.4 Ensure the appointment of CA Safeguarding roles, including a Safeguarding Focal Point in the Leadership Team with clearly articulated responsibilities to coordinate and lead safeguarding work.

5.7.5 We are obliged to report to DFAT and it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Focal Point to ensure reporting is in accordance with DFAT requirements and timeframes (see Appendix 4).

## **5.8 Breaches**

5.8.1 Proven allegations of improper conduct relating to children and non-compliance of this Policy, the Professional Behaviour Standards or the Code of Conduct by CA personnel, partners or representatives may result in disciplinary action, including termination of contract or employment, reporting to authorities and/or legal action.

## 5.9 Accessing and Communicating the policy

5.9.1 This Policy will be available on our website and disseminated to all our personnel, visitors and partners. Further communication to partners is outlined in Section 5.4.

5.9.2 We will ensure that all personnel, visitors, program partners and their downstream partners are notified of and made aware that they are required to comply with the policy.

## 5.10 Reviewing this policy

5.10.1 CA is committed to continuous improvement to our child safety policy, procedures and practices. This policy will be reviewed at a minimum every three years to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

5.10.2 Feedback on this and other safeguarding policies is openly encouraged from CA Personnel, Partners, Stakeholders and the communities we work with others. Feedback, as well as emerging good practice and collaborative lessons learnt across the development sector, will be used to strengthen this and related policies and procedures.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

At Caritas Australia, a culture of child protection starts with strong leadership.

**6.1 The Board of Directors** is responsible for:

- Ultimate accountability for our organisational policies
- Guiding governance and culture of CA through strategic leadership
- Approving this policy and holding the Leadership Team accountable for how effectively this policy is implemented

**6.2 Leadership Team members** are responsible for:

- Leading by example
- Ensuring our procedures, practices, plans and operations align with this policy
- Reporting to the Board via the CEO on child protection matters
- Ensuring their team is aware of this policy and understand their responsibilities

**6.3 The Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is upheld
- Informing the Board of any concerns relating to child protection and giving progress reports
- Ensuring all senior employees are accountable to this policy

**6.4 Safeguarding Focal Point** is the Caritas Australia employee identified as the point of contact for PSEAH. Currently the Safeguarding Focal Point is the Head of International Programs. They are responsible for:

- Ensuring that CA meets its obligations to Safeguarding (Child Protection and PSEAH) Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment).
- Implementing policies and procedures.
- Receiving and managing reports and investigations.
- Reporting to the Board and other stakeholders.

- Ensuring this policy is accessible via the CA website.

**6.5 Safeguarding Coordinator** is the Caritas Australia employee who supports the Safeguarding Focal Point. They are responsible for:

- Delivering on our safeguarding obligations.
- Coordinating the Safeguarding Working Group.
- Supporting International Programs team to include safeguarding in our programs and to build partner capacity.
- Participating in sector initiatives.

**6.6 Safeguarding Working Group members** (at an organisational level) and Safeguarding Network (at a regional programmatic level) are responsible for:

- Supporting their respective teams to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensuring safeguarding roles are appointed in-country.
- Fostering an organisational culture that embodies safeguarding including PSEAH.

**6.7 In-country Managers (Country Representatives)** are responsible for:

- Creating transparent practices that show how child safeguarding will be handled.
- Communicating this policy and related procedures to personnel.
- Regularly including child safeguarding as an agenda item at team meetings.
- Engaging their teams in an open, honest and meaningful way to ensure they understand what is expected of them.

**6.8 Personnel (including you)** are responsible for:

- Understanding and following this policy and related procedures.
- Ensuring that your actions are in line with this policy, and that your work reflects the Guiding Principles and Policy Commitments above.
- Not encouraging others (directly or indirectly) to breach this policy.
- Reporting any breach to your manager. However, if it is a sensitive complaint, you must report it to [confidential@caritas.org.au](mailto:confidential@caritas.org.au) (the Complaints Focal Point) or [Stopline](#) whistleblower service.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure protecting children is at the forefront of all decisions and interactions of our work. This responsibility extends to each person and partner who is involved in implementing programs and activities directly or on behalf of CA.

## 7. Related Documents

This policy supports Caritas Australia's compliance with the following:

### 7.1 Legislation:

- Criminal Code Act 1995
- Division 272 (child sex offences outside Australia)
- Division 273 (offences involving child pornography material or child abuse material outside Australia)

- Division 474 (telecommunications offences, subdivision C)
- Crimes Act 1914
- Australian State and territory legislation addressing child exploitation and abuse that occurs in Australia
- In-country legislation relating to child exploitation and abuse in the countries where CA is working, implementing or supporting programs

### **7.2 International Child Protection Instruments:**

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- International Labour Organisation Convention 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour

### **7.3 External policies, procedures and documents:**

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Policy 2018
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- CAN DO Standard Operating Procedures for PSEAH and Child Protection

### **7.4 Caritas Internationalis governance documents:**

- Caritas Internationalis Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy
- Caritas Internationalis Management Standards

### **7.5 Caritas Australia governance documents:**

- Code of Conduct
- Speaking Up Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Screening Check Procedure
- Recruitment Guidelines
- Investigation Guidelines

## **8. Appendix List**

- Appendix 1: Definitions
- Appendix 2: Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Appendix 3: How to Report and Key Contact Points
- Appendix 4: DFAT Reporting Requirements



- Appendix 5: How to Respond to Disclosure and Suspected Abuse
- Appendix 6: Incident Reporting Form

## 9. Information about this policy

Can be accessed by	Anyone via website
Can be shared with	Internally and externally (including with other organisations)
Distributed to	Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of CA including Australian-based employees, in-country employees, Board of Directors, Diocesan Directors, volunteers, partner organisations, downstream partners or anyone doing relevant work
Document Owner	Safeguarding Focal Point
Approved by	Board of Directors
Commencement Date	01 Oct 2020
Next Review Date	01 Oct 2023
Document number	SI-CP-POL-v3.2

### How this policy has changed over time

Version	Approval Date	Summary of changes
n/a	Aug 2010	Original publication
n/a	Nov 2011	Revised publication
n/a	Nov 2014	Revised publications to incorporate the change to DFAT & updated legislation, updated logo
v2.0	28 Jun 2018	Revised to incorporate DFAT policy requirements, add Child Protection Reporting Process and to explain the responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer
v2.1	2 Nov 2018	Re-numbered the document number to be consistent with the Policy and Procedure Development Framework
v3.1	26 Jun 2020	Added zero tolerance of inaction as a principle Aligned with standard CA glossary of terms Integrated compliance framework (point 4 of v2.1) into policy commitments Updated Child Protection Code of Conduct to Professional Behaviour Standards (Appendix 2) Updated reporting process (Appendix 3) and mechanisms (Appendix 4) Updated for consistency with new policy templates
v3.2	18 Nov 2020	Put in new template
V3.3	07 May 2021	Wording update in section 2 and section 5.2.2 re adopting generic policy.

## Appendix 1: Definitions

Child or Children	A child is any person under 18 years of age, regardless of whether a nation's laws or customs recognise adulthood earlier.
Child Abuse	<p>Child Abuse includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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 wellbeing</li> <li>• Emotional abuse — refers to 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Ill-treatment — disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate or improper manner; making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and/or a pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate degrading comments or behaviour towards a child</li> <li>• Grooming — generally refers to behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. For example, an offender might build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualise that relationship (for example by encouraging romantic feelings, or exposing the child to sexual concepts through pornography)</li> <li>• Online grooming — The act of sending an electronic message to a child, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender; or of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient who the sender believes to be a child.</li> </ul> <p>Abuse may be current or recent, or in some cases historical, i.e. an adult may disclose sexual abuse that took place when they were a child. Abuse may be carried out by adult men or women, or by immediate family members or relatives of the child.</p> <p>There are some groups of children who are particularly vulnerable; children with disabilities are among these, and children from ethnic minority communities who may be particularly</p>

	vulnerable if their communities suffer from violence, natural disasters or discrimination. Children who are refugees, asylum seekers 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.
Child Exploitation	One or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child</li> <li>• Possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material</li> <li>• Committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming</li> <li>• Using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage</li> </ul>
Child Protection	Is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused, neglected or mal-treated.
Child Safeguarding	The broad obligation on personnel and partners to ensure that the design and delivery of programs and organisational operations do not expose children to adverse impacts, including the risk of abuse and exploitation, and that any concerns about children's safety within the communities where they work are appropriately reported
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.
Downstream Partners	Downstream partners are organisations, contractors or others engaged by our partners to deliver development and or humanitarian programs or activities.
Duty of Care	Duty of Care is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of harm or injury.
Harm	Any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended
Personnel	Any person doing paid or unpaid work for, or on behalf, of CA including Australian-based employees, in-country employees, Board of Directors, Diocesan Directors, volunteers, consultants, contractors and sub-contractors.
Participant	Persons or communities who participate in programs or activities run by or on behalf of CA.

Program Partner	Are individuals or organisations that Caritas Australia works with, accompanies and supports to deliver humanitarian and development programs or activities.
Stakeholder	External individuals, groups organisations with whom CA works or engages, who have an interest or shared stake in the success of CA's work.
Safeguarding	In CA, Safeguarding refers to the actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for all, including our Personnel, Partners and Participants, particularly those that are most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse or exclusion. Safeguarding includes prevention, mitigation, response and feedback and complaints handling mechanisms.
Safeguarding Focal Point	The Safeguarding Focal Point is responsible for ensuring implementation of CA's Safeguarding Policy, Guidelines and Procedures (which include Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment), and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken to deal with and/or report to appropriate agencies, incidents of Child Abuse, incidents of suspected child abuse or breaches of the DFAT Code of Conduct promptly. These actions will be done in accordance with these procedures and related CA Child Protection documents and standards which accord with standards and guidelines issued by relevant authorities including the DFAT and relevant legislation (see Section 7). CA Safeguarding Focal Point is a responsibility generally appointed to the Head of the International Programs Team.
Unacceptable risk	The portion of identified risk that cannot be tolerated, and that must be either eliminated or controlled. For people deemed an unacceptable risk, control mechanisms are not considered appropriate.
Visitor	Anyone who visits CA premises, programs or activities in Australia and internationally.
Vulnerable adult/person	Vulnerable adults are individuals aged 18 years and over who are at greater risk of significant harm due to factors such as gender, age, mental or physical health, or as a result of poverty, inequality or an experience of displacement or crisis. A person's vulnerability can change over time, and may be permanent or temporary.
We, us or our	Refers to Caritas Australia.
Working with children	Working with children means 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 work.

## **Appendix 2: Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Note: The Professional Behaviour Standards for Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults is included below as an appendix. It also forms part of the Code of Conduct.

Professional Behaviour Standards reflect our commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults, and preventing all forms of abuse, exploitation and harassment.

The commitments below capture the essence of professional behaviour expected by Caritas Australia but may not cover all potential situations.

### **I commit to protecting the rights of everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults**

- I treat everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults, with respect.
- I am aware that I have a privileged position being associated with Caritas Australia. I am aware of unequal power relationships (such as between adult and child, or partner and program participant) and will not take advantage of my position.

### **I prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults**

- I am aware of situations and behaviors that may be perceived as exploitative or abusive (such as giving gifts, paying extra attention or developing 'special' friendships).
- I will avoid these situations or take extra measures to keep everyone safe.
- I will not use physical punishment, or threats of physical punishment.
- I will not do things for children that they can do for themselves.
- I will not give alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to children.
- I will not speak or act in a way that is inappropriate, exploitative, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- I will not hire children for domestic or other work that is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreation; or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Wherever possible, I ensure that another adult is present when I'm having contact with children.
- I will not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary; if it is unavoidable, I will have my supervisor's permission, and have another adult present if possible.
- I will not invite unaccompanied children people into my home or vehicle, unless they are at immediate risk of danger.
- These behaviors are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

### **I help create a culture that empowers and protects children**

- I create an environment which prevents all forms of exploitation, abuse and harassment (including sexual, physical and emotional).
- I develop strategies for listening to the needs and interests of children.

- If I am a manager at any level, I am responsible for supporting and developing the culture and systems that maintain a safe environment.

#### **I prevent all forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

- In line with international standards, I will not have sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 (regardless of local law). I understand that not knowing a person's age is not a defense or excuse.
- I will not engage in any sexual activity or relationship with those who are benefiting from our work. I will not improperly use my position or power for sexual purposes. Such relationships put the integrity of our work at risk.
- I will also make sure that no harm (including sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment) occurs during delivery of our programs or activities.
- I will not exchange money, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to our program participants.
- I will not engage in the trafficking of human beings, in any form.

#### **I use technology appropriately and responsibly**

- I will not use any technology (such as computers, mobile phones, cameras or social media) to exploit or harass children.
- I will not access exploitative material, such as child pornography, in any way.

#### **I act responsibly when I work with photos or videos**

- I respect local traditions or restrictions when taking photos or videos of children.
- I get informed prior consent. This means I obtain permission before taking a photo or video. I will explain how the photo or video will be used. I will keep written records of the permission obtained.
- I make sure that photos and videos show children in a dignified and respectful way. I make sure they do not appear submissive or vulnerable. They should be adequately clothed and not appear in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- I make sure that images are honest representations of the context and the facts. I do not exaggerate the truth to make the story more compelling.
- I make sure that photo data (such as file labels, meta data or text descriptions) do not reveal information about a child that could identify them, such as their name or location. I take steps, such as turning off GPS tracking, before taking photos. I double-check that the photos and videos are de-identified before sharing.

#### **I act within the law. I disclose offences**

- I immediately disclose any investigations or offences (including charges, convictions, allegations and other outcomes) that relate to child exploitation and abuse including those under traditional law. I will disclose them whether they occurred before, or during, my association with Caritas Australia.
- I comply with all relevant legislation (both Australian and local) including child labour laws.

### **I report immediately, even if I'm just concerned, suspicious or unsure**

- I immediately inform my direct manager if I become involved in a personal relationship which may be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative, or where unequal power dynamics (real or perceived) exist. If I am unsure if my relationship falls into this category, I will discuss the situation with my direct manager and/or People & Culture.
- I must immediately report if I have concerns, suspicions or allegations of:
  - Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not
  - A sexual relationship that involves a power imbalance (for example, between a personnel member from Caritas Australia or another agency and a program participant or community member)
  - A child being abused, exploited or at risk of harm
  - Breaches of Caritas Australia's policies, Code of Conduct or this Professional Behavior Standards for Protecting Children
- I understand that I can make a report:
  - via email: [confidential@caritas.org.au](mailto:confidential@caritas.org.au)
  - by contacting Stopleveline
- I understand that Caritas Australia will take all reports seriously, elevate issues quickly and respond appropriately. Caritas Australia will take a 'do no harm' approach and prioritise the rights of the victim/survivor while ensuring procedural fairness to all parties.
- I take responsibility for reporting. I must not assume that someone else will report a situation relating to the safety of children or people experiencing sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment.

## Appendix 3: How to Report and Key Contact Points

If you alleged, witnessed or suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation or policy non-compliance you have a mandatory obligation to speak up. This can be done:

a) In person/verbally:

- Program participants, community members or any person can speak to our personnel or partners in the field who will complete the required forms and forward them to the Complaints Focal Point
- Partners can verbally report directly to the relevant CA Project Coordinator, the Safeguarding Focal Point, the Complaints Focal Point or any CA personnel
- Our personnel can speak with their manager, a fellow CA personnel, the Complaints Focal Point or the Safeguarding Focal Point

See Appendix 5 'How to Respond to Disclosure or Suspected Abuse' which may help for a report being made in person, particularly for disclosure by a child.

b) By phone:

If a concern is received by phone, the receiving officer will identify who they are and their role, listen to the complainant, and record details including:

- The complainants name, address and contact details and the date on which the complaint is received
- If an anonymous complaint is received through the whistle-blower service, whether the complaint wishes to receive updates through that service
- The name of the receiving CA officer or external service provider
- The details of the matter including the nature of the issue, the location of the issue, and who is alleged to be involved
- The receiving officer will confirm the relevant details and advise the complainant of what the next step will be

See also, Appendix 6 'Child Protection Incident Reporting Form' for details on information to collect over the phone.

c) In writing:

If a concern is received in writing the receiving officer may, where contact details are supplied, contact the complainant and confirm the relevant details as well as any additional information. Written incident reports or concerns regarding alleged, witnessed or suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation or policy non-compliance can be made by email or post.

If you are making a complaint by writing, you can complete the 'Child Protection Incident Reporting Form' (Appendix 6)

### Key Contact Points:

Complaints Focal Point

- Phone: 1800 02 44 13 (in Australia) and ask for the Complaints Focal Point
- Or any in-country CA office who will elevate your concerns to the Complaints Focal Point.
- Email: [confidential@caritas.org.au](mailto:confidential@caritas.org.au)
- Mail: Caritas Australia. 24-32 O'Riordan St, Alexandria NSW 2015, Australia



a) [Stopline](#) external whistleblower service

- Telephone: 1300 30 45 50 (in Australia)
- Facsimile: Caritas Australia, c/o Stopline +61 3 9882 4480
- Email: [caritas@stoline.com.au](mailto:caritas@stoline.com.au)
- Online: <https://caritas.stolinereport.com>
- Mail: Caritas Australia, c/o Stopline, Locked Bag 8, Hawthorn, Vic 3122

The Whistleblower Hotline will forward the report to CA's Complaints Officer. Note that this option can allow the reporter to remain anonymous to CA.

## Appendix 4: DFAT Reporting Requirements

- a) It is mandatory for all DFAT employees and partners to report immediately any suspected or alleged case of child exploitation, abuse or policy non-compliance by anyone within scope of the policy in connection with official duties or business. Members of the community can also report. All reports should be made to [childwelfare@dfat.gov.au](mailto:childwelfare@dfat.gov.au).
- b) Employees and partners must report any behavior that is suspected of being child exploitation or abuse (including possession of child exploitation material) or policy non-compliance by:
- DFAT employees, including locally engaged employees
  - personnel of a DFAT funded contractor or civil society organisation, including subcontractors
  - Personnel of a DFAT funded multilateral organisation
  - a DFAT funded volunteer
  - an employee of another Commonwealth Government Agency
  - any report made to you by anyone relating to child exploitation and abuse or policy non-compliance by a DFAT employees or DFAT funded partners
  - an Australian Volunteers for International Development Program participant or host organisation
  - a DFAT Scholarship or Fellowship awardee including Australia Awards program recipients
  - a DFAT grant recipient, including under the Direct Aid Program and Public Diplomacy programs
  - any Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or Australian company

Where an individual or organisation has already reported, but becomes aware of additional information, the individual or organisation must also report that information.

## Appendix 5: How to Respond to Disclosure and Suspected Abuse

Caritas Australia (CA) recognises that disclosures (i.e., when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual) and suspicions (i.e., when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place, past or present) should always be investigated and acted upon swiftly, making the welfare of children the paramount consideration. Refer to the 'Reporting Form for Suspicions of Abuse' (Appendix 6).

Any information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people: this might include the relevant senior manager, the Safeguarding Focal Point, Safeguarding Officer and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in CA and/or partner, where appropriate. Parents or caregivers will also be informed, if appropriate, based on a determination made by the Safeguarding Focal Point. Apart from this, confidentiality should be carefully observed at all times including after the matter has been dealt with and specifically in relation to documents created in relation to the handling or processing of the matter.

If any member of employees or others suspects child abuse, or if a child or young person makes a disclosure, the following steps should be taken immediately:

- a) If the allegation is in relation to the CEO then the matter must immediately be reported to the Chair of the Caritas Australia's Board of Directors.
- b) If the allegation relates to a child who is resident in Australia or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child in Australia may be at risk, the Safeguarding Focal Point will report the matter to the relevant state child protection authorities.
- c) If an allegation of child abuse as defined in this Policy is reported as taking place in another country and involving an Australian citizen or national, the allegation will be reported to the Australian Federal Police by the Safeguarding Focal Point.
- d) If the allegation involves a non-Australian citizen and the child is overseas, Caritas Australia will provide support to the partner in reporting the incident to the relevant government departments and agencies in the country concerned and to DFAT.
- e) In all reports of suspected child abuse as defined in this Policy, the person reporting the matter must report the incident or suspicion within 24 hours following the mandatory reporting requirements in whichever country the work is being carried out to the relevant senior manager, e.g. the CEO, the Safeguarding Focal Point, Safeguarding Officer or the Country Representative and to DFAT.
- f) In Australia, the report of the incident or alleged incident must be made to the Complaints Focal Point who will work with the Safeguarding Focal Point and Safeguarding Officer to conduct or arrange an internal investigation in a timely manner and may involve external legal, mediation or expert advice if required.

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

- a) Accept what the child says but don't ask any probing or leading questions – leave that to child protection professionals or the police.
- b) Take the alleged abuse seriously but do not promise that you can "fix" anything.
- c) Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- d) Let the child know you need to tell someone else. Do not promise total confidentiality. Let the child speak freely but do not press for information
- e) Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- f) Record carefully what you have heard while it is still fresh in your mind. Include attendance, date, time and place of your conversation and any incident disclosed. Date

and sign anything you write and number the pages. If you do not have access to a computer, take care with handwriting. When writing what the child said, try and be as accurate as possible and use inverted commas to make clear what the child said, rather than your interpretation of what the child said. If you are going to give your opinion or assessment put it under a separate heading so as not to confuse the facts with an opinion.

- g) Report in as much detail as possible and without delay to CA Complaints Focal Point using the Child Protection Reporting Form for Suspected Abuse enclosed in this document.

## Appendix 6: Incident Reporting Form

### Safeguarding Reporting Form

#### Notification Details

In line with our Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment and Child Protection Policy' principles, Caritas Australia takes a victim/survivor centred approach to the reporting of safeguarding issues. Where it is safe to do so, please provide as much information as possible, and in line with the wishes of the victim/survivor.

If you do not know any answers to the questions below, please write do not know. You do not need to seek further information to submit the form.

If you have any concerns about completing this form please contact the CA Complaints Focal Point email [confidential@caritas.org.au](mailto:confidential@caritas.org.au).

#### All Information in this form will be treated confidentially

Personnel, Representatives and Partners must report any behaviour that is suspected of causing Harm and any instances of Policy non-compliance.

You can lodge this form at email [confidential@caritas.org.au](mailto:confidential@caritas.org.au)

#### 1. Information about the person completing this form

*Note, please consider the privacy and protection of any individuals reporting. Only provide details of any individuals if permission has been granted to share this information.*

Name	
Organisation	
Position or relationship to Caritas Australia	
Telephone	
Email	
Date	
Location (country/province/city etc)	

#### 2. Information about the victim/survivor *If more than one person was affected, please include all.*

*Note, please consider the privacy and protection of any individuals reporting. Only provide details of any individuals if permission has been granted to share this information.*

Name	
Age	

Gender	
Current location of the victim/survivor <i>(include who the person lives with if applicable)</i>	
Any additional information about the victim/survivor, such as injuries, disability, general impressions.	
What actions have been taken to ensure the victim/survivor's safety at present?	
Have referrals been made to support services such as a medical facility or counselling services? <i>(if yes, please provide details)</i>	
Location <i>(country/province/city etc)</i>	
Does the victim/survivor know that you are reporting this concern?	
<b>3 Information on the suspected concern</b>	
What Happened?	
When did it take place? <i>(date(s) and time(s))</i>	
Where did it take place? <i>(country, province, city/village/town etc. Please provide as much detail as possible)</i>	
Were there witnesses? <i>If yes – who are they and how can they be contacted?</i>	
Date incident report was received by you?	
<b>4 Project/program details related to the incident</b>	
In which Project or Program?	
Location of Project or Program <i>(country, province, city/village/town etc. Please provide as much detail as possible)</i>	

Name of partner(s) associated with the project/program: <i>(e.g name of organisation(s); include downstream partners)</i>	
<b>5. Reporting to others</b>	
Are local police aware of the incident/allegation? <i>If yes, please provide details</i>	
Who else has been informed about this safeguarding concern <i>(include both internal and external e.g. police / doctors)</i>	
<b>6 If applicable: Information about the suspected perpetrator/person(s) involved</b> <i>If safe to do so</i>	
Name	
Gender	
Suspected perpetrators relationship to victim/survivor	
Suspected perpetrators relationship to Caritas Australia	
Is the suspected perpetrator Australian or living in Australia?	
Current Location	
Contact details	
<b>5. Other information</b>	
Please provide any other relevant information here that has not already been mentioned above	