Child Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Good Neighbours Australia ("GNAU") recognises that by the nature of its work, its operations may pose a risk to children; therefore, it has developed this child safeguarding policy to proactively work to mitigate those risks.

Child abuse and exploitation is a global problem; in line with GNAU's mission to help those suffering from poverty, disasters and oppression, to rebuild hope and achieve self-reliance, GNAU will work, through the implementation of this policy, to address the denial of children's rights and ensure that children are not harmed in any way as a result of their involvement in its work.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("CRC")[1] is the foundation of GNAU's work on child safeguarding. Children's rights as enshrined in the CRC act as the motivation for both GNAU's internal and external child safeguarding measures and activities.

Purpose

- Ensure all families, young people, and children are aware of the safeguarding policies put in place by GNAU to protect them from deliberate and accidental harm.
- Ensure all GNAU Committee members, employees, volunteers, contractors and implementing partners are aware of their vital role in keeping children and young people safe; and embrace a culture of openness and participation of all children and young persons no matter their background.
- Ensure all children and young people are treated fairly and without discrimination of any form.
- Ensure no child is discriminated against because of age, culture, religion, gender, or disability, and recognise these differences do not diminish a child's right to safety or GNAU's responsibility to protect them from harm.

Scope

This policy applies to all people involved in GNAU's operations, programs, and activities, whether in Australia or overseas:

- All staff members, including Committee members, employees, contractors, volunteers, interns, and partners.

[1] UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: https://www.unicef.org/media/60981/file/convention-rights-child-text-child-friendly-version.pdf

- Implementing partners, individuals, organisations, or corporations that have a contract or agreement with GNAU.
- Donors, media representatives, and other participants taking part in any of GNAU's official activities.

Guiding Principles

- **Best Interests of the Child**: All actions of GNAU to support the child and their family will be based on a determination of the best interests of the child.
- **Child Rights**: GNAU is committed to vulnerable children and young people, in all their diversity, to assert and realise their rights as laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- **'Do No Harm':** GNAU ensures that its people, operations, and programs will only act to protect, rather than make a child or young person more vulnerable. This involves assessing risks to children, proactively monitoring risks, and mitigating identified potential of harm.
- **Zero-Tolerance of Violence Against Children, Exploitation, and Abuse:** GNAU has a zero-tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse; and is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children.
- **Shared Responsibility**: Child Safeguarding is a shared responsibility for GNAU, its partners, and individuals as child safeguarding is everybody's business. For the purpose of this policy, supporters include donors, child and community sponsors, community fundraisers, potential donors, as well as any members of the general public who have dealings with GNAU.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Child	Anyone under the age of 18, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
Safeguarding	The policies, procedures, responses, and practices employed to ensure that all children (any person under the age of 18) who come into contact with GNAU and GNAU partners, are protected from all forms of harm, abuse, or exploitation. It involves the shared responsibility and preventative actions to ensure all staff, operations, and programs do not harm children, and ensuring GNAU's environment is safe for them
Child Protection	Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child

Harm	Refers to anything that individuals, representatives or partners do or fail to do to cause direct or indirect intentional or unintentional abuse, including but not limited to: ● Physical ● Sexual ● Emotional ● Exposure to Family Violence ● Neglect ● Exploitation The definitions of these terms are the same as in the PSEAH Policy
Partners	Individuals, groups, or organisations who have a formal/contractual relationship with GNAU
DFAT's Child Protection Nine Minimum Standards[2]	DFAT's accreditation requires ANGOs meeting its nine minimum standards across various areas, including financial management, child protection, risk management, and partnerships

Child Safeguarding and Child Protection[3]

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on ***protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm***. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Child safeguarding refers to ***the broad range of actions organisations must take to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, as well as prevent harm***. Effective child safeguarding must be embedded in the interactions that children have with an organisation or group. Safeguarding policy and procedure must also specify requirements for how organisational representatives respond to risk and harm, including abuse or harm that has been experienced by a child or young person outside the organisation.

The following is an illustration of how child protection and safeguarding complement each other:

[2] DFAT's Child Protection Nine Minimum Standards: child-protection-policy.pdf
[3] Australian Childhood Foundation: Safeguarding vs. child protection - Australian Childhood Foundation Professionals

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding

The proactive policies and procedures in place for the benefit of all children involved in our activities

Child Protection

One aspect of the safeguarding umbrella specific to children who are at risk or suffering significant harm

National Safeguarding Focal Point ("NSFP")[4]

In Australia, GNAU's Program Coordinator is the designated NSFP, accountable for monitoring, maintaining, reviewing, and updating the Child Safeguarding Policy and other relevant procedures and policies.

GNAU's Program Coordinator is responsible for child safeguarding in its development programs.

Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Please refer to **Appendix A**.

International Network

As an affiliate of the Good Neighbours global network, GNAU's Child Safeguarding Policy is consistent with Good Neighbours International's Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy.[5]

Incident Management

A. Reporting

GNAU considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. It takes all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and acts on these reports immediately. GNAU is committed to a reporting process which is truthful, fair and professional.

[4] UNICEF's Definition of NSFP: https://www.unicef.org/youthledaction/documents/safeguarding-focal-points
[5] Good Neighbours International Safeguarding Policy: https://www.goodneighbors.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Good-Neighbors-Child-and-Adult-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf

It is mandatory for all GNAU personnel (including committee members, employees, contractors, volunteers, interns, and partners) to report any witnessed, suspected or alleged incidents of child exploitation or abuse or any breach of this policy and/or Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

These concerns may relate to a child, or a staff member involved in the organisation or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organisation's programs. Anyone having a concern should immediately follow GNAU's Child Safeguarding Procedures.

Who Should Report?
All GNAU staff including committee members, employees, contractors, volunteers, interns, and partners.

What Should be Reported?
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 a GNAU staff, volunteer, or other associate that breaches the Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

When to Report?
Child abuse concerns should be raised immediately.

Who to Report to?

- Overseas - reports can be made to GNAU's implementing partner or the GNAU Program Coordinator.
- In Australia - reports should be made to the Program Coordinator, GNAU's designated National Safeguarding Focal Point ("NSFP") person.

B. Investigation

The Executive Director, in consultation with the NSFP, will discuss the allegations and then decide upon the next step. This will involve one or more of the following:

- Interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to gather more information with which to make a decision about the allegation.
- Reporting to local police and or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed.
- Reporting to the Australian Federal Police when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed regarding child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, and child

pornography.

- Reporting to DFAT immediately where DFAT funds are involved
- Reporting to local child protection services as necessary.
- Handling the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter.
- No further action taken.
- Providing support to all stakeholders (including reporters) as necessary.

Responsibility

The Executive Director is responsible for this policy.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required.

Relevant Policies and References

Internal:

- GNAU's Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (see Appendix A)
- GNAU's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
- GNAU's Pledge of Compliance to the Code of Conduct, Child Protection, Safeguarding and Diversity Inclusion and Gender Equality Policy
- Child Incident Form
- Child Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

External:

- DFAT's Nine Minimum Standards[6]
- ACFID's Child Safeguarding Template[7]
- ChildFund Australia's Safeguarding Policy[8]
- UN Convention on the Rights of a Child

[6] DFAT's Nine Minimum Standards: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/accreditation-assessment-checklist.pdf
[7] ACFID's Child Safeguarding Template: https://acfid.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ACFID-Code-of-Conduct-Guidelines-for-the-Development-of-a-Child-Safeguarding-Policy_Nov-18.pdf?_rt=MXwxfHNhZmVndWFyZGluZ3wxNzUwMTQyNjkz&_rt_nonce=80fcb51743
[8] ChildFund Australia Safeguarding Policy: https://www.childfund.org.au/child-safeguarding-policy/

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29/12/2021	V.1	Adapted from the "Good Neighbours Global Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy"	Executive Director
07/08/2024	V.2	Reviewed and updated	Executive Director
02/07/2025	V.3	Revised for better alignment with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ACFID's Code of Conduct	Executive Director

Appendix A – Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

I, _____, agree that whilst employed, engaged by, or representing GNAU, I must:

- Treat all people with respect regardless of their position in an organisation, age, gender identity, mental or physical health, ability and disability, ethnic and indigenous status, race, religious identity, sexual orientation, political opinion, economic or social status, or being in disaster or conflict prone regions
- Never use language or behaviour that is inappropriate, abusive, bullying, harassing, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate Never have a sexual relationship (including sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or sexual exploitation) with any child participating in GNAU's programs
- Never engage in any transactional sex, being the exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex (including sexual favours) with any child (engaged in GNAU activities or GNAU funded activities or not). Never engage in any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) regardless of the age of the majority or the locally recognised age of consent. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence
- Never engage with commercial sex workers or engaging in prostitution of any form whilst on a work trip (including travel time, field visits and leisure time) and representing GNAU, even if commercial sex work is legalised in that country
- Never develop a relationship that involves or appears to involve bias, preferential treatment or improper use of your position including but not limited to a close and emotional relationship involving intimate relations, public displays of affection and/or public expression of intimate relations
- Strongly discourage sexual relationships between implementing partner staff and program participants. If a relationship develops, ensure that a conflict of interest is declared to protect against exploitation and abuse
- Unless absolutely necessary, ensure that, another adult is present when in contact with children involved in GNAU activities or GNAU funded activities in Australia and overseas
- Encourage all children and adults, parents/guardians, community members, implementing partner organisation representatives and representatives of GNAU to raise concerns of any exploitation and/or abuse and harassment
- Not invite unaccompanied children that participate in GNAU activities or GNAU funded activities into my place of accommodation, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger

- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless necessary, in which case I must obtain my manager's or the GNAU representative's permission, and ensure that another adult is present (if possible)
- Not do things of a personal nature that a vulnerable person can do for him/herself, such as providing aid with changing clothes or using the bathroom
- Not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary, or culturally insensitive way
- Not consume alcohol or illegal substances within the presence of children or provide alcohol or drugs to children including illegal and prescription substances unless appropriately qualified health professionals provide prescription and pharmaceutical substances to children for medical treatment
- Not under any circumstances provide gifts to vulnerable people that have not been approved by a GNAU representative
- Use computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately; and never to exploit or harass children, or access material that exploits children through any medium
- Not use physical punishment or physically discipline children participating in GNAU activities or GNAU-funded activities
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour law in relation to child labour
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of wrongdoing including but not limited to exploitation, sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and/or policy non-compliance in accordance with the PSEAH Policy
- Immediately inform my manager of any concerns that my words, actions, or behaviour in any situation may be considered to breach the GNAU's Child Safeguarding Policy, PSEAH Policy, and Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with GNAU that relate to child exploitation and abuse
- Not knowingly link any child with a supporter who is known to intend harm to a child
- Not knowingly provide any identifying information about a child to a supporter
- Not develop inappropriate relationships with any child who participates in GNAU activities of GNAU funded activities. This includes having contact with a child who is a supporter or volunteer through personal telephone, email, or social media accounts
- Ensure children involved in GNAU activities or GNAU funded activities are well informed of the process and have provided consent for any photos/film or stories gathered
- Not publish undignified* photos taken of children in GNAU programs in social media

*Undignified:

- Images should be decent and respectful and not present people as victims.
- Images should not depict people in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- People (especially children) should be adequately clothed in photographs and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.
- Paternalistic images should be avoided, e.g. portraying the agency/donors as the
- 'providers'.
- Photographs should be used in context and should be a true representation of events.

USE OF CHILDREN'S IMAGES FOR WORK RELATED PURPOSES

Before photographing or filming a child, I must:

- Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions before photographing or filming a child
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent / guardian before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how photographs and / or video will be used
- Ensure that photographs, film, videos, and DVD present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are an honest representation of the context and the facts
- Only use images that are relevant to the organisation or implementing partner's activities and services, such as children participating in an activity specifically associated with the organisation or implementing partner
- Not produce photographs, films, videos, or DVDs that contain identifying information about children; for e.g., show a school uniform, a document with a child's name, address, telephone number, or location
- Ensure file labels, text descriptions, and metadata do not reveal identifying information including GPS location data about the child, when sending or publishing images electronically

I will conduct myself in a manner consistent with GNAU's values to:

- Prioritise the rights of children,
- Promote self-sustainability of individuals, families, and communities,
- Organise local volunteers to join in the development of their communities,
- Encourage people to partner and participate with us as donors,
- Work in cooperation with the communities we serve,
- Maintain professional accountability by being transparent in our reports,
- The mandate is guided by the principles of inclusivity, respect, and dignity.

I undertake to comply with GNAU's Child Protection, Safeguarding, and PSEAH Policies.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a GNAU representative, to avoid actions or behaviours that are, or could be construed as exploitation (including sex transactional or otherwise), abuse, harassment, and bullying.

I understand that it is my obligation to report wrongdoing or suspicion of wrongdoing in accordance with GNAU's Child Safeguarding Policy and/or PSEAH Policy.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix B - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[9]

[9] UNCRC: https://www.unicef.org/media/60981/file/convention-rights-child-text-child-friendly-version.pdf

Children who move from their home country to another country as refugees (because it was not safe for them to stay there) should get help and protection and have the same rights as children born in that country.

Every child with a disability should enjoy the best possible life in society. Governments should remove all obstacles for children with disabilities to become independent and to participate actively in the community.

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.

Every child who has been placed somewhere away from home - for their care, protection or health – should have their situation checked regularly to see if everything is going well and if this is still the best place for the child to be.

Governments should provide money or other support to help children from poor families.

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.

Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.

Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Governments must protect children from taking, making, carrying or selling harmful drugs.

The government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.

Governments must make sure that children are not kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

Children have the right to be protected from all other kinds of exploitation (being taken advantage of), even if these are not specifically mentioned in this Convention.

Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in prison with adults. Prison should always be the last choice and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their family.

Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.

Children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so they can get back their health and dignity.

Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities. Prison should only be the last choice.

If the laws of a country protect children's rights better than this Convention, then those laws should be used.

Governments should actively tell children and adults about this Convention so that everyone knows about children's rights.

These articles explain how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF - and other organisations work to make sure all children enjoy all their rights.