

Schedule A – Child Safety Policy (MPF1337)

Guidelines for Child Protection in Australian Aid Projects

1. The University will assess any risks to children prior to implementing a new Australian Aid Project (defined below) and will pro-actively manage those risks in accordance with this policy.
2. In undertaking Australian Aid Projects, project supervisors (defined below) will:
 - a) institute child safe practices within project systems consistent with this policy;
 - b) ensure that all Project Participants (defined below) are informed of this policy (and this Schedule) and that they have signed the University's *Child Safety Code of Conduct for Australian Aid Projects* ([Schedule B](#)) before commencing work on the project;
 - c) not knowingly engage anyone who poses a risk to children and will not assign an individual to a relevant project:
 - i. who does not hold or cannot obtain a WWCC;
 - ii. who will not agree to adhere to this policy and the associated *Child Safety Code of Conduct for Australian Aid Projects* ([Schedule B](#)); and
 - iii. who is not appropriately trained in child protections awareness and understand their obligations to protecting children when carrying out their work.
 - d) maintain up to date project files which include copies of this policy, signed codes of conduct, Working with Children Checks and related documents;
 - e) implement clear reporting procedures consistent with the [DFAT Child Protection Policy](#) that can be applied to projects in countries other than Australia;
 - f) consider and take steps to comply with the legal position, and specific laws and penalties regarding child abuse and protection, in each country of operation;
 - g) document actions, discussions and responses relating to allegations of child abuse or exploitation, and keep records securely in a location to which access is restricted;
 - h) minimise the number of people who are informed about allegations of child abuse or exploitation; and
 - i) take care with written communications relating to allegations of child abuse or exploitation, including to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and the communication is received by the intended recipient only.
3. In addition to existing requirements of the University's Recruitment and Appointment Policy ([MPF1152](#)), the following requirements apply in relation to the pre-employment, recruitment, selection and appointment of Project Participants to Australian Aid Projects:
 - a) all interviews of applicants for positions on an Australian Aid Project will include behavioural-based questions;
 - b) before an applicant is appointed to an Australian Aid Project:
 - i. the applicant must supply the contact details for at least two referees with whom verbal reference checks are to be carried out; and
 - ii. the University will carry out at least two verbal referee checks in respect of the applicant and the checks will include questions relating to conduct and behaviour.
 - c) applicants will obtain a National Criminal History Check or equivalent criminal record check, in addition to which additional foreign policy checks must be conducted for each country in which the

applicant has lived for 12 months or longer over the last five years, and for the applicant's country of citizenship. Where a National Criminal History Check or equivalent cannot be obtained, a [statutory declaration](#) outlining efforts made by the applicant to obtain a foreign police check, and disclosing any charges and spent convictions related to child exploitation, may be accepted instead; and

d) in relation to the checks listed in (c) above, applicants must be informed by the University of the purpose for which the resulting police clearance certificate is to be used and that the police record check may be sighted by DFAT.

4. Where the University works with external partners on relevant Australian Aid Projects, where the project supervisor has assessed the project as having credible risks of child abuse, partners must adopt this policy and the *Child Safety Code of Conduct for Australian Aid Projects (Schedule B)*, with appropriate amendments, or have in place policies which are equivalent in all material respects, before undertaking the specific project.

5. Project participants must immediately report any allegation, disclosure or observation of suspected or actual child physical or sexual abuse or exploitation to DFAT at childwelfare@dfat.gov.au in accordance with the guidance provided in the [DFAT website - Guidance on Child Protection for Australian Aid Projects](#). These guidelines apply to incidents occurring within Australia or overseas.

6. Individuals who report suspected abuse or exploitation of children are subject to protections under the [Protected Disclosure Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#).

7. The Project Supervisor will make an initial assessment of any allegation of child abuse or exploitation based on the quality and reliability of the information. The project supervisor will give primary consideration to:

- a) protecting the child from further exploitation, abuse and victimisation, including arranging for a safe place, medical care and/or counselling if appropriate;
- b) distancing the alleged perpetrator from the child, acknowledging that a proper process needs to be implemented to ensure natural justice and that penalties should not be imposed without clear justification;
- c) comply with any other mandatory reporting or disclosure requirements, if required under sections 5.8-5.13 of this policy.

8. Where evidence or allegations suggest the law has been breached or where a child is likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of abuse, the Project Supervisor must report allegations of child abuse or exploitation to the relevant lawful authority (such as the local police) as soon as practicable.

9. The University may take the following action against any Project Participant who is found to make deliberately false or malicious allegations of child abuse or exploitation against another person:

- a) Employees may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy ([MPF1328](#)), up to and including termination of employment; and
- b) Other Project Participants covered by this policy who are not employees may have their appointment revoked by the University.

Definitions

DFAT means the Commonwealth of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Project participants means any individual assigned to work on an Australian aid project, and includes University employees, Honorary appointees, University guests, contractors, volunteers and students of the University.

Project supervisor means the University employee considered the most senior member of the Australian aid project.