

Policy Title	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Policy Number	10
Responsibility	Director - Programs

Revision	Adopted by Board	Comments (if any)
1	October 2015	
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3	9 March 2022	

1 Purpose

This Policy outlines Australian Red Cross' (Red Cross) commitment as a Child Safe Organisation. It summarises Red Cross child safeguarding principles and objectives, and the obligations of all Red Cross People, and others within the scope of the policy, to keep children safe, strong and well.

Australian Red Cross is committed to protecting the rights of all people particularly those who may be experiencing vulnerability.

We are a child safe organisation. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. We value, respect and listen to children. We are committed to supporting child safety and wellbeing in our work.

We recognise that we work in contexts where children experience heightened vulnerability or where children's circumstances give rise to additional vulnerability, further highlighting our obligations to proactively keep children safe, strong and well.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook which provides detailed guidelines in how to apply this policy in practice.

2 Scope

This Policy relates to all work undertaken by or on behalf of Red Cross and applies to:

- (a) all Red Cross People - Employees, Members, Volunteers, labour hire workers and work experience students, and
- (b) Suppliers (including contractors, sub-contractors and sole traders) and partner organisations who provide services or work with Red Cross in connection with any Red Cross activity or collaboration which involves direct or indirect contact with children. The words "in scope" are used to describe the suppliers and partner organisations that this policy applies to.

3 Policy Principles

Principle 1: We are committed to ensuring that all children of all abilities, identities, backgrounds and circumstances are safe, strong and respected in all that we do. We will be proactive in ensuring our practice is culturally respectful, inclusive and accessible for all children, families and communities.

Principle 2: We are committed to supporting child wellbeing, resilience and safety and protecting children in our work. We apply a holistic view of children's safety and wellbeing and an understanding of child safe practices aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Principle 3: We value, respect and listen to children. The best interests and the views of children are central to our decision making and actions. We are committed to upholding the rights of the

child and to applying, so far as practicable, the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Principle 4: We have zero tolerance for any form of child abuse. We are committed to working in partnership with children, families and communities to support early intervention, reduce vulnerability and prevent harm to children.

Principle 5: We act in accordance with Australian legal standards and obligations and the relevant laws of other countries in which we operate, in the context of international legal conventions, declarations and agreements relating to children's rights and protection.¹

4 Approach

The above principles will be achieved by the following (details of which are found in the [Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook](#)):

- (a) Fostering a child safe culture across the entire organisation by embedding this policy and associated child safety and wellbeing procedures and governance arrangements that facilitate their implementation.
- (b) Embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- (c) Making our commitments to keep children safe and well, as detailed in this Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook and our Charter of Commitment to Children and Young People publicly visible and accessible to all.
- (d) Actively seeking children's participation in our work including design, implementation, monitoring and review and child friendly feedback and complaints processes.
- (e) Providing opportunities for children to engage in activities that are inclusive, meaningful, safe, and build resilience.
- (f) Supporting and empowering families and carers to meet children's needs.
- (g) Minimising the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children in their daily life including support for families in contact with our activities.
- (h) Paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- (i) Building and maintaining culturally safe environments and practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- (j) Actively supporting children's connection to culture, family and community.
- (k) Embedding robust child safe recruitment and supervision practices to effectively manage the risk of employing or engaging persons who may pose a danger to the safety or wellbeing of children in our work. Including, but not limited to, an organisational statement in advertised position descriptions, robust screening process in regard to Working With Children Clearance (WWCC), police checks, statutory declarations, reference checks and child focused interview questions.
- (l) Ensuring all Red Cross People and in-scope suppliers and partners are informed about their responsibilities to keep children safe, strong and well.
- (m) Ensuring all Red Cross People and in-scope suppliers and partners sign and comply with Red Cross Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- (n) Providing Red Cross People and in-scope suppliers and partners, with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe and minimise risks to children, including training, resources and dedicated child safety roles.
- (o) Requiring in-scope suppliers and partners to apply child safe practice in their work with Red Cross.
- (p) Undertaking child safety risk assessments of all programs and activities that may have direct contact with children or include access to any records relating to children.
- (q) Ensuring child safety and wellbeing risks are assessed as part of the procurement process when Red Cross is considering contracting another organisation or individual, and through the partnership protocol if considering partnering with another organisation.

- (r) Embedding robust processes for reporting child safety and wellbeing concerns internally and externally in compliance with our legislated and contractual obligations and whenever it is in the best interests of a child. Reporting processes are outlined in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook. The Whistleblower policy details options for anonymously reporting as a whistleblower.
- (s) Ensuring all reports of child exploitation, neglect or abuse, or a breach of this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct are treated seriously.

5 Exceptions

Any exception or carve outs to the requirements of this Policy and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook may only be implemented by the relevant Manager with the approval of the National Manager Child Protection, Safeguarding & Practice, and relevant Director.

6 Further support

If you require more detail or operational knowledge in relation to this policy and any of these topics, please refer to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook or contact the Safeguarding and Practice team at safeguarding@redcross.org.au

7 Attachments

- Annexure 1:** Child Safe Code of Conduct – the standards of conduct and behaviour expected to protect children and ensure their safety and wellbeing. It applies to everyone within the Scope of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Annexure 2:** Definitions – the glossary for use when reading the Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Annexure 3:** Other Red Cross Policies and Procedures – includes reference to relevant Red Cross policies and procedures
- Annexure 4:** Related External Documents

Annexure 1: Red Cross Child Safe Code of Conduct

To understand the Child Safe Code of Conduct below, please refer to the definitions set out in Annexure 2.

NOTE: The National Manager Child Protection, Safeguarding & Practice may authorise the application of other Child Safe Code of Conduct terms, if they may be more suitable in the circumstances. Examples include tailoring the Child Safe Code of Conduct terms for fundraising and community events after a risk assessment has been completed.

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The Policy

I have read and understood the Red Cross Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

General obligations

As a Red Cross person, I agree and understand that these obligations apply:

- while I am working for Red Cross or engaged in activities related to Red Cross
- when I am publicly displaying a connection to Red Cross (for example, wearing a t-shirt)
- in situations where I am recognised as a representative of Red Cross
- at all times when I am on international placement working in roles and or on projects

As a Red Cross supplier, I agree and understand that these obligations apply when during my work or activity with Red Cross:

- when I have direct or indirect contact with children and/or their families and carers
- when I supervise others who have direct or indirect contact with children and/or their families and carers
- when I have access to records relating to children and/or their families and carers
- when I have a governance responsibility or management oversight of programs or services accessed by children and/or their families and carers

I will:

- Act in accordance with Red Cross Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook at all times.
- Behave respectfully and ethically towards children and their families.
- Keep children's safety and wellbeing at the forefront of what I do and act in their best interests.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including laws related to children working.
- Immediately disclose if I have been charged with, or convicted of, any offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Respond to any child safety and wellbeing concerns, complaints or allegations of harm to a child promptly and in line with this Policy and the processes outlined in the Child Protection Safety and Wellbeing Handbook and related policies and procedures.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation, abuse and neglect, and policy non-compliance in accordance with internal and external reporting processes, detailed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Only access children's records for legitimate work purposes.

I will not:

- Use language or behaviour towards children (including on-line behaviour) that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, exploitative, demeaning, neglectful coercive or culturally inappropriate.
- Access children's records for non-work-related purposes or use children's data or images in any way that may comprise their rights, safety or wellbeing.
- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.

- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily or engage in unnecessary physical contact.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for a purpose unrelated to Red Cross activities.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- Take or share any photos or images of children unless required for approved work purposes.
- If I think this Code of Conduct has been breached by myself or another person in their Red Cross work in I will:
- Act to prioritise the best interests of children, including taking actions promptly to ensure that children are safe.
- Immediately report the breach and actions taken in response, including any child safety and wellbeing concerns, as per incident reporting and response procedures outlined in the Child Protection Safety and Wellbeing Handbook.
- Follow Red Cross policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.

Filming and photographing children and use of children's images for work related purposes

- When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes, I will:
- Comply with all relevant Red Cross policies and procedures as detailed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook to ensure children's and their family's consent, dignity, safety and wellbeing.
- Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.
- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child including an explanation of how the photograph or film will be used.
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs 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 honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure all files are securely stored and shared in line with data security requirements to prevent their misuse, and all file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child if sharing images electronically or publishing images in any form.

Acknowledgements

I also understand that any breach of the Policy or the Child Safe Code of Conduct must be reported immediately by me as part of my commitment to accountability and continuous improvement. I understand that in certain circumstances a breach may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, termination of services, termination of Red Cross membership, legal action, and/or criminal investigation and prosecution.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Annexure 2: Definitions (to be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook)

Carer or caregiver	A person who has responsibility for a child including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a foster or kinship out of home carer • a Red Cross Person in that capacity • a sole trader or contractor in that capacity
Child	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	Child abuse is sometimes also referred to as ill-treatment or neglect. It is an act, a failure to act, or pattern of behaviour over time by a person that results in serious harm or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an imminent risk of serious harm to a child. It includes the following in relation to a child: • physical harm • sexual abuse • emotional/psychological harm, including exposure to domestic and family violence • exploitation, and • neglect.
Child abuse material	Material that expressly or implicitly depicts a child or someone who appears to be a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as victim of torture, cruelty or physical abuse • engaged in a sexual pose or a sexual activity • with their private sexual parts exposed • in the presence of another person that is engaged in a sexual pose or sexual activity <p>Child abuse material includes, but is not limited to, videos, photos, drawings and animations including material that has been altered to make the person look like a child.</p>
Child exploitation	Using a child for profit, unlawful labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possessing, controlling, producing, obtaining, transmitting and distributing child abuse material • face to face and online grooming including for the purposes of sexual exploitation, criminal activity or to radicalise to violent extremism • coercing another person to commit an act or acts of exploitation against a child.
Child protection	An action or intervention designed to protect an individual child from harm, particularly arising from child abuse. It includes procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.
Child safeguarding	All the actions an organisation takes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with or impacted by the organisation, including strategies to protect children from harm.
Code of Conduct	Australian Red Cross Child Safe Code of Conduct, previously known as the Child Protection Code of Conduct
Contact	See “direct contact” and “indirect contact”
Direct Contact (with a child)	Includes face to face contact and all direct communication including telephone or online (text, voice calls, voice messages, video messages, gaming, social media, video chat etc.). It applies to roles where the contact is reasonably expected to occur as a normal part of the activity or work environment and is more than incidental.
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (or any subsequent Department of the Australian Government, with responsibility for foreign or external affairs).

Emotional/ psychological harm	<p>Inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. It includes acts of commission (things that are done) or omission (things that are not done) with a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem, social competence or psychological wellbeing.</p> <p>It can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to family and domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.</p>
Grooming	<p>Actions deliberately taken to befriend and influence a child (and/or parents and caregivers) with the objective of exploitation. It may occur in person, over phone or online, over a brief or extended time period.</p>
Handbook	<p>Australian Red Cross Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook, previously called the Child Protection Handbook.</p>
Indirect contact (with a child)	<p>Includes access to children's data, as well as any contact that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incidental • brief • usually supervised by a caregiver for children of an age requiring supervision
Informed consent	<p>Consent given by a child, parent or guardian with an informed understanding of the implications, purpose, potential use and/or consequences.</p>
In-scope Supplier	<p>Suppliers who may in the course of their work with Red Cross have direct or indirect contact with children, including access to children's records.</p>
Neglect	<p>The continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the conditions required for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing, including providing sufficient attention and responsiveness, and meeting essential needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, education and adequate supervision appropriate to the age and needs of the child.</p>
Partner organisation	<p>A partner organisation engaged by Red Cross to work with Red Cross or to provide services to or in connection with projects (whether within or outside Australia).</p> <p>For projects funded (in whole or part) by DFAT, this includes all of the partner organisation's personnel.</p>
Personnel	<p>An employee or other person providing services.</p>
Physical harm	<p>Non-accidental or reckless acts that result in physical injury or pain. Includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.</p>
Red Cross	<p>Australian Red Cross Society (ABN 50 169 561 394).</p>
Red Cross Member	<p>A person who is a member of Red Cross in accordance with the Rules of Red Cross.</p>
Red Cross Person/People	<p>A Red Cross employee, volunteer, labour hire worker, work experience student or Member.</p>

Sexual abuse	<p>The involvement of a child in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend or are unable (due to their age or development) to give informed consent to. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual comments • watching children engage in, or having children observe, sexual acts • grooming • fondling, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration • voyeurism, exhibitionism • exposing the child to sexual content • involving the child in child abuse material.
Strong (Safe, Strong and Well)	<p>A strong child is empowered and resilient, knows their rights, will speak up and have their voice heard, and has a strong sense of culture, identity and belonging.</p>
Supplier	<p>Sometimes referred to as contractor, includes any organisation or person (other than a Red Cross Person) who provides Red Cross with goods or services, including subcontractors, agents, related entities and consultants.</p>
Volunteer	<p>A person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a volunteer in accordance with Rule 4 of the Rules of Red Cross, or • provides voluntary service of Red Cross, or • provides voluntary service as a member of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Board of Red Cross • a Committee of the Board • a Divisional Advisory Board • a Committee of a Divisional Advisory Board. <p>A 'volunteer' does not include any person who is a blood donor, organ donor, 'umbilical cord' donor, milk donor or tissue donor with the Australian Red Cross Blood Service.</p>
Wellbeing (well)	<p>Sometimes referred to as "quality of life," wellbeing is a combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors, strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. It includes a positive sense of self, connectedness to others, self-efficacy, agency and resilience.</p>
Work experience student	<p>A student who is engaged in activities of Red Cross as a consequence of participating in a course of formal study, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a school-based work experience program • a TAFE/University or other accredited educational provider of work experience • a compulsory work placement program • a government labour market work experience program • internships.
Working with children clearance (WWCC)	<p>A pre-employment screening check for people seeking to engage in child related work conducted by the relevant state or territory regulator. It screens applicants' criminal and professional conduct (depending on jurisdiction) and is designed to prevent people who pose an 'unjustifiable risk' to children from working directly with children. Screening checks are applied differently across the country as they are regulated at the State/Territory level.</p> <p>In general, Red Cross requires a WWCC for any person undertaking any role that has direct contact with children. It is Red Cross policy that no Red Cross person in a role requiring a WWCC can commence in their role until the WWCC is completed and they have been cleared (approved to work with children) by the regulator.</p>

Annexure 3: Related Red Cross Documents

- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook](#)
- [Charter of Commitment to Children and Young People](#)
- Ethical Framework
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- [Client Reportable Incident Policy and Management guide](#)
- Complaints, Concerns and Feedback Policy
- HR ATT 01 – Recruitment and Selection Policy
- HR ATT 04 – Police Check Policy
- HR DEV 04 – Work Experience Policy
- IT – Computer and electronic devices use policy
- Finance – Procurement Policy (2017)
- Relevant Privacy/Data Security Documents

Please refer to the [master document register](#) on The Lounge for the most current policies.

Annexure 4: Related External Documents

- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Child Friendly Version\)](#)