**AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY**

**Board Policy Statement Child Protection**

**KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND WELL**

**THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY SUMMARY**

Children have the right to feel safe, and to be safe and well at all times.

All children are vulnerable. In addition, we often work in contexts where children experience heightened vulnerability or whose own circumstances give rise to additional vulnerability.

We are committed to support child wellbeing and safety and to protect children in our work.

We do not tolerate any form of child abuse, child neglect or child exploitation.

To support children to be well and safe in our work:

* we place the best interests of the child at the centre of our decision making;
* we value and respect children;
* we provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are inclusive, meaningful, safe, and educational;
* we implement strategies that minimise the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children;
* we facilitate opportunities for children to build on their strengths and enhance their resilience;
* we contribute to their communities to prevent and reduce their vulnerability.

In all programs and services, community development and place-based work:

* we must undertake risk assessments (as required by the Red Cross risk framework) that include child protection risks, mitigations and monitoring processes;
* we must inform and advise children and their families of:
* their rights to feel safe and to be safe and well at all times,
* our child protection reporting obligations, and
* our feedback and complaints processes;
* we must include child protection requirements in contracts, agreements and other arrangements with partners, contractors and sub-contractors.

**My responsibility - keeping children safe and well**

As a Red Cross Person (whether as a member, a volunteer or a staff member), each of us is responsible to ensure that we protect the safety and wellbeing of children in our Red Cross activity or work. This includes:

* when we work with children,
* when we come into contact with children in our activity or work,
* when we supervise others who work with children or have contact with children,
* when we have access to records relating to children;
* when we have a governance responsibility.

As a Red Cross Person, I must:

* support and comply with all Red Cross activity in connection with child safety and wellbeing,
* comply with the standards of behaviour in the Child Protection Code of Conduct,
* complete Red Cross prescribed child protection training,
* undertake regular screening of my suitability for the work I am doing in Red Cross, including:
	+ providing relevant Working with Children Checks or Working with Vulnerable Persons checks;
	+ undertaking a criminal record or police check;
	+ where suitable checks cannot be obtained from a regulatory body or police, provide a statutory declaration which is satisfactory to Red Cross.

**What should I do if I have a concern about child abuse, neglect or exploitation?**

* I may have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is ***at risk*** of abuse, neglect or exploitation; ***or***
* I may have reasonable grounds to suspect a child ***has been abused***, neglected or exploited; ***or***
* I may be ***told about*** abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child.

If any of these things happen, I will:

* report those matters to my line manager (if possible through Red Cross online system Report It), and
* provide or arrange for follow up support, where practicable and available.

***If I am required by law to report child abuse, child neglect, or child exploitation to the relevant police or child safety authority, I will do so.***

**What if I am uncertain about what to do?**

If I am uncertain about what to do, including whether I must report a matter to the police or a child protection agency, I will contact my line manager, a Red Cross Child Safety Contact Officer, a human resources team member, or the *Supporter* *Services* *Centre* for support and assistance.

**Other information:**

This ***Policy Statement in a Nutshell*** sets out general principles, including the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Specific obligations and guidance for Red Cross People are set out in the full Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Handbook.

**How to obtain a copy of the Policy and Handbook:**

The Policy is available at: [www.redcross.org.au/cppolicy](http://www.redcross.org.au/cppolicy)

and the Handbook is available at: [www.redcross.org.au/cphandbook](http://www.redcross.org.au/cphandbook)

I may request a printed copy of the Policy or the Handbook from *Supporter Services Centre.*

***Supporter Service Centre***

***For any assistance call 1800 811 700******or email contactus@redcross.org.au***