



ACIAR CHILD SAFE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to reflect the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research's (ACIAR) commitment to the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (the Framework) and the practical application across the agency.

BACKGROUND

The Framework aims to protect children and young people from the risk of harm or abuse and requires Commonwealth agencies to be 'child safe'.

A child safe organisation is one that:

- empowers and values children and young people
- engages with families and the broader community
- adopts suitable strategies
- takes appropriate action to promote child safety and wellbeing at all levels of the organisations

The Framework comprises four core requirements:

- a. ACIAR to conduct risk assessments in relation to its activities to identify the level of responsibility and contact with children and young people, evaluate the risk of harm or abuse and put in place appropriate strategies to manage identified risks.
- b. Establish and maintain a system of education and compliance, to ensure ACIAR employees are aware of and compliant with, the Framework and relevant legislation including working with children checks and mandatory reporting requirements.
- c. Adopt and implement the National Principles (**Attachment A**). The National Principles outline ten elements that have been determined to be fundamental to making ACIAR safe for children and young people.

SCOPE/COVERAGE

This policy applies to all executive, employees, contractors and consultants who conduct work for ACIAR.

The policy applies to all activities in ACIAR which involve or relate to contact with children or young people. When conducting risk assessments, ACIAR will consider all types of known and potential contact and interactions with children and young people, including:

- direct physical contact
- face-to-face contact
- oral communication
- written communication
- electronic communication

In addition, ACIAR will put in place measures to promote the protection of children in services and activities they fund.

DEFINITIONS

Children and young people are defined as a person under 18 years of age or a person apparently less than 18 years of age if the person's age cannot be proved.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive Team

The Executive Team has an overall responsibility for their business area, particularly where there is a possibility or likelihood of contact with children.

The Executive Team must ensure a risk assessment is conducted annually in relation to ACIAR to identify the level of responsibility for, and contact with, children, evaluate risks to child safety, and put in place appropriate strategies to manage identified risks.

The Executive Team must familiarise themselves with the policy and role model behaviours that sustain the safety of children and young people and ensure that employees understand their obligations to protect children when carrying out their work.

Employees

Employees must be aware of this policy and ensure that child protection risks are considered and managed in accordance with this policy. This includes complying with the APS Code of Conduct and ACIAR Child Safety Code of Conduct (**Attachment B**).

ACIAR employees must report any behaviour that is suspected or alleged to breach this policy to General Manager, Corporate in accordance with ACIAR's Guideline for Breaches of the Code of Conduct.

A public interest disclosure can be made by reporting it to the discloser's supervisor, an authorised officer of ACIAR or the Commonwealth Ombudsman in accordance with ACIAR's Public Interest Disclosure policy.

Human Resources Manager

The Human Resources (HR) Manager is responsible for recording and acting on any suspected incidents or concerns in relation to child safety. Any suspected incidents will be consistent with the process for breaches of the APS Code of Conduct.

The HR Manager will review this policy annually after completing the annual risk assessment and in consultation with the Executive Team.

The HR Manager is also responsible for ensuring an AFP police check is a minimum condition of employment for all ACIAR employees. Additional checks such as working with children check will be as per the identified positions as required.

IDENTIFIED POSITIONS

In considering ACIAR business context and its interaction with the Framework the following areas are considered to be most likely to be impacted, where there is likely to be more than 20 percent of their duties related to working with children or young people:

- a. The Executive Team
- b. Research Program Managers and Associated Research Program Managers
- c. Director and Assistant Director – Outreach
- d. Manager and Project Officer – Capacity Building
- e. Coordinator Country Offices
- f. Country Manager and Assistant Country Manager – Locally Engaged Staff
- g. Graduate Officers
- h. Communication activities – internet, social media and publications.

The risk associated with ACIAR's identified positions having contact with children is low. This contact will be limited to employees travelling through public areas such as airports and where children may accompany their parent or guardian working in the field and an ACIAR employee is conducting a site visit.

ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT

As part of the business planning process each year, a risk assessment occurs to identify risks to child safety and wellbeing through ACIAR programs or contact. Where known, risk assessments will consider the future work of ACIAR. Where risks are identified, strategies will be put in place to manage those risks.

The Framework requires risk assessments be conducted to ensure the creation of a child safe culture and environment where people consider and address risks to children before and as they arise.

LEGISLATION AND REPORTING

The National Office of Child Safety provides the Framework and information for dealing with children and young people.

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. All jurisdictions possess mandatory reporting requirements; however, each State/Territory has different requirements in relation to who is mandated to report and the types of abuse that must be reported.

Any ACIAR employee who has undertaken mandatory reporting or who otherwise suspects that a child or young person is at risk or harm must raise the matter with their manager. Unless advised otherwise by their manager, the employee or contractor must advise the Human Resources Manager of the incident.

CHILD SAFETY RESOURCES

Children's Rights

- Australian Human Rights Commission

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights>

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

- Child friendly versions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/484_540.htm

- National Office for Child Safety web page

<https://pmc.gov.au/child-safety>

- Child Safe Organisations website

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/>

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

<https://chilsafe.gov.au/national-principles>

- Practical tools for implementing the National Principles

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/practical-tools>

[Introductory self-assessment tool](#)

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/learning-hub/organisational-self-assessment>

- Guide for parents and carers

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/practical-tools>

[Introductory video on the National Principles](#)

<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/learning-hub/about-our-training-resources>

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Under the *Children and Young People Act 2008*, a public servant who, in the course of employment as a public servant, work with, or provides services personally to, children and young people or families is considered a *mandated reporter*.

A mandated reporter must report any suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, neglect, or expose to domestic violence.

- ACT: Online form from Access Canberra: 'Reporting child and abuse and neglect'¹. or 1300 556 729
- NT: Child Abuse Hotline - 1800 700 250
- NSW: Child Protection Helpline - 132 111
- VIC: Child Protection - 1300 664 997 (Melbourne). Other areas visit Health and Human Service website²
- QLD: Child Safety Services' Enquiries Unit - 1800 811 810
- TAS: Advice and Referral Line - 1800 000 123
- WA: Crime Stoppers - 1800 333 000
- SA: Child Abuse Report Line - 131 478

Alternatively, if your concerns relate to abuse outside of a family context, or if you are unsure of who to report to, contact policing on 131 444 to make your report.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the Police now by calling 000

¹ <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/landing.htm?formCode=1136>

² <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts>

ATTACHMENT A – NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

ATTACHMENT B – ETHICAL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR CHILD SAFETY

ACIAR employees are required to comply with the Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct. A breach of the Code of Conduct can result in sanctions, ranging from a reprimand to termination of employment.

In addition to the APS Code of Conduct, employees, contractors and consultants undertaking work on behalf of ACIAR that involves working or contact with children are expected to adhere to the following behaviours while they are performing those duties:

- treat all children with respect and consider the diverse backgrounds and needs of children
- use appropriate language and behaviour towards children and not be harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children
- never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- comply with all relevant legislation in relation to child labour
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or during association with ACIAR
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children
- demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries
- create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for children and their families
- identify and mitigate risks to children's safety
- respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with ACIAR procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.

Photographing or filming a child or children's images for work purposes

- take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child
- understand national laws related to photography, filming and privacy
- obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided
- ensure resulting visual content (photographs, videos, social media content, graphic design elements etc), represent children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner

- respect a person's right to refuse to be photographed or video, refrain from taking photos or videos if there is a sense of reluctance or confusion
- not causing harm - Individuals or groups may be put at risk of reprisal, violence or rejection in their communities as a result of exposing their identity or personal story through the publication of their photograph or broadcast of any video
- not misrepresenting the individual, situation, context and location of the photograph or video
- absolutely no payments or any other form of compensation being provided to subjects in exchange for their photograph or video to be taken or for their consent or signed release for publication or broadcast
- ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form

Photographs and videos of issues that are culturally sensitive, politically sensitive or socially stigmatised must protect the identity and privacy of individuals.

- do not identify individuals - position the camera in such a way that faces and other unique characteristics cannot be discerned
- obtain informed written consent to use real names and locations in situations where disclosure could result in harm. Otherwise, remove detailed personal information such as names and locations in captions or any other associated documentation
- identifiable images of individuals should not be used to illustrate sensitive subject matter in such a way as to indicate that the individual is connected with the issue

Photographs or videos of people with special needs are to be taken with particular care, compassion and protection of privacy.

- photograph or videos all people with respect and dignity. Special care and compassion must be exercised with vulnerable subjects
- survivors of sexual exploitation, gender-based violence or abuse are not be identified as such
- an individual's status as a person living with HIV, TB or any other serious health conditions must not be revealed without informed written consent
- an individual's engagement in sex work or other socially marginalised or criminalised (or criminal) activities must not be identified

care must be taken in photographing or filming people in times of crisis. Do not exploit an individual's vulnerability at times of trauma or grief.