

Child Safeguarding Policy

WaterAid Australia

Document control

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Version control

Date	Version	Reason for change	Author
April 2015	1	Update	
November 2016	2	Update and renamed from Child Protection Policy	
June 2017	3	Update	
August 2018	4	Update	
April 2021	5	Update the Code of Conduct only (Annex A): Two additional conditions on gifting, alcohol and drugs.	Alexandra Kidner
September 2022	6	Update and alignment with WaterAid Global Principles of Child Safeguarding	Charlotte Flew & Renae Davies

1 Related Policies/Procedures/Guidance Notes

	Date	Version
WaterAid Global Standard on Child Safeguarding	2018	2.0
WaterAid Global Safeguarding Policy	2021	2.0
WaterAid Global Principles of Child Safeguarding	2022	1.0
WaterAid Global Code of Conduct	2021	3.0
WaterAid Global Safeguarding Internal Operating procedure	2023	3.0
WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Procedures	2022	
WaterAid Australia Ethical Photography Guidelines	2020	3.0
WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Working Group Terms of Reference	2021	1.0

WaterAid Australia Complaints Procedure	2020	2.0
WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Focal People Terms of Reference	2020	1.0

2 Introduction

WaterAid believes that safe water, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental to life and everyone has a right to these basic services. Through our work WaterAid will come into contact with some of the world's most vulnerable and marginalised communities, where a commitment to child safeguarding is paramount. The provision and delivery of safe water, sanitation and hygiene through our partners is just one way in which we come into contact with children. Our fundraising and advocacy activities, along with communication channels also results in direct and indirect contact with children.

Adopting the appropriate level of duty of care to safeguard children is vital for the organisation. We must ensure that those benefiting from, or working with, WaterAid are not harmed in any way. As such, we aim to be a child safe organisation in all that we do. Everyone associated with WaterAid has shared responsibility to minimise the risks of abuse or harm to children.

This document outlines the commitments that WaterAid has made in order to safeguard children through our work.

3 Purpose

- 3.1** WaterAid recognises that children have a right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse as enshrined in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 3.2** By providing guidance and direction on the responsibility that WaterAid has to the children with whom its staff, volunteers, consultants, partners and supporters come into contact, we aim to reduce risks of child abuse or harm to children.
- 3.3** All WaterAid representatives should understand issues of child safeguarding, and their role and responsibility when interacting with children directly or indirectly.
- 3.4** This policy aims to minimise organisational risks and ensure WaterAid's duty of care is covered through implementing procedures that are designed to safeguard children participating in or impacted by WaterAid programs and activities.
- 3.5** Further, the WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Procedures provides clear guidelines for WaterAid representatives to follow so that they can fulfil their child safeguarding responsibilities and meet the commitments in this policy. The Procedures sets out mandatory requirements for:
 - Preventative measures;
 - Risk Assessments;
 - Clear reporting requirements for incidents or concerns, and

- Managing investigations.

4 Policy Commitments

- 4.1 Rights of all children:** WaterAid seeks to protect the rights of all children, including those who have a disability, those from minority ethnic / faith groups and regardless of gender, sexuality or status.
- 4.2 Best interest of the child:** The safety and welfare of children is paramount. All decisions made by WaterAid regarding the welfare and protection of children will be made based on the principle of the best interest of the child.
- 4.3 Zero tolerance to child abuse:** WaterAid has zero tolerance to any form of child abuse by anyone who is working within its programs or represents WaterAid in any way. WaterAid will not permit anyone to have contact with or work with children or access communities with whom it works if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or well-being.
- 4.4 Risk management approach:** Whilst it is not possible to eliminate all risks of child abuse, WaterAid will ensure risks of child abuse or harm to children are identified, monitored and reasonably mitigated against in programs and activities.

5 Scope

- 5.1** The commitments made in this policy apply to all representatives¹ of WaterAid and countries where WaterAid works.
- 5.2** WaterAid's country programs have a duty to determine specific national legislation or practice that should be applied in their specific context, however, these policy commitments are to be applied and adhered to across WaterAid.
- 5.3** The Policy covers all WaterAid representatives including:
- WaterAid staff (those employed and paid by WaterAid)
 - WaterAid Board Members and volunteers (an unpaid worker)
 - Consultants (those engaged by WaterAid on a contract for service rather than an employment contract)
 - WaterAid partner organisations and sub-contractors
 - Supporters and other participants on field visits organised by WaterAid.

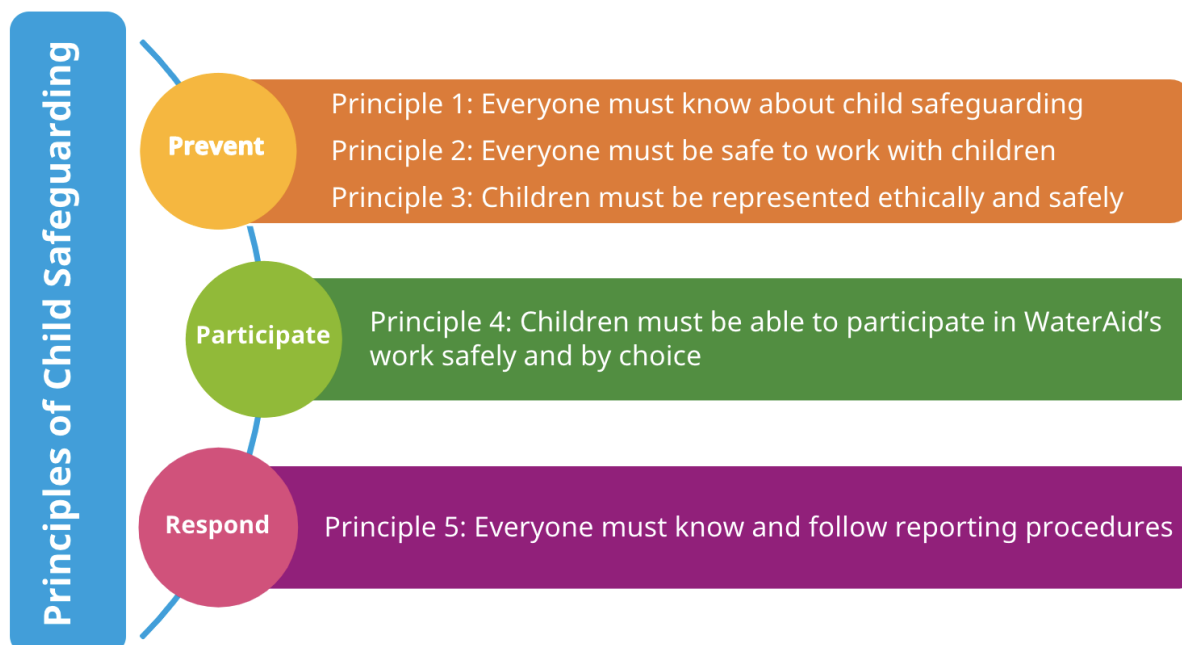
6 Principles

This Policy is aligned with WaterAid's Global Principles of Child Safeguarding, and is supported in practice by WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Procedures.

We believe all people including children have the right to live their lives free from sexual violence and harassment. The five principles of child safeguarding aim to

¹ A representative is defined as a staff member, consultant or volunteer who is conducting work on behalf of WaterAid either contractually, or voluntarily.

provide guidance to WaterAid staff and representatives to reduce risks and to work safely and in the best interests of children.



Prevent:

Principle 1: Everyone must know about child safeguarding:

Safeguarding Focal Person: WaterAid will appoint a Safeguarding Focal Person (SFP) (or more than one where appropriate) anywhere that WaterAid has an in-country presence. The name, contact details and the role of the responsible officer will be clearly communicated to all staff and WaterAid representatives and kept updated. The responsibilities of the SFP are outlined in the WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Focal Point Terms of Reference.

Awareness Raising and Training: All WaterAid representatives are aware of child safeguarding requirements and the risks to children. All WaterAid representatives will receive information relating to WaterAid's Global Safeguarding Policy, Global Code of Conduct and WaterAid Australia's Safeguarding Procedures during induction, briefings and regular training. Where needed, further training will be provided for relevant individuals, for example, SFPs or responsible officers.

Working with Partners: WaterAid will work with partner organisations to build their capacity and ensure compliance with this Policy. WaterAid will include agreed requirements in partnership agreements, sub-contracts, MOUs as appropriate, and if the organisation is in breach the agreement may be terminated.

Principle 2: Everyone must be safe to work with children

WaterAid will not knowingly allow a person to be in contact with or work with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing. As part of this Policy a number of key commitments have been identified and incorporated in the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviours of all WaterAid representatives when interacting with children. All staff, volunteers, consultants, supporters and participants on field visits organised by WaterAid are required to sign the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct (Annex A to this policy).

Child Safe Recruitment and Selection: Child safe recruitment and selection procedures are in place to minimise the risk of recruiting and retaining people who are likely to pose a threat to children. These are outlined in the WaterAid Australia Safeguarding Procedures; and aligned with Global Disclosures Policy.

Principle 3: Children must be represented ethically and safely

Use of Children's Images and Personal Information: The Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Procedures both outline expected behaviours and guidelines associated with the use of children's images and personal information. Additional information is outlined in the WaterAid Australia Ethical Photography Guidelines.

Participate

Principle 4: Children must be able to participate in WaterAid's work, safely and by choice

Assessing Child Safeguarding Risks: WaterAid considers and assesses the child safeguarding risks in all activities where representatives have direct or indirect contact with children, and adopt strategies for managing perceived risks. Risk assessments are to be documented, reviewed/monitored and updated over the life of the project/activity. Guidance on how to conduct a child safeguarding risk assessment is provided in the Safeguarding procedures.

Employment: WaterAid will not employ anyone under the age of 18. This applies to all WaterAid's activities in every country where WaterAid works, regardless of the legal age of adulthood locally.

Respond

Principle 5: Everyone must know and follow reporting procedures

Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns: All WaterAid representatives must immediately, and within 24 hours, report any concerns, incidents or allegations relating to:

- child exploitation
- child abuse
- non-compliance with the Safeguarding Procedures or Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Responding to concerns and investigation: Any concern, incident or allegation relating to exploitation, abuse, harassment or non-compliance with this Policy, the Global Safeguarding Policy, or Code of Conduct will be treated seriously, acted upon fairly and without bias, and any associated investigations will commence without undue delay once such an occurrence is known.

Incident management will be coordinated by the Global Safeguarding Team in accordance with the [Internal Safeguarding Operating Procedures](#). WaterAid will manage all reports on a case by case basis, and will ensure a survivor centred approach. WaterAid will immediately sever all relations with anyone employed by or associated with WaterAid who is found to have committed child abuse or exploitation.

Disciplinary Sanctions: Noncompliance with the WaterAid Australia Child Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct by a member of staff is treated as gross misconduct and subject to disciplinary action as per the disciplinary policy in each country. WaterAid may terminate an employment contract summarily and without notice if an employee breaches any provision in the WaterAid Australia Child Safeguarding Policy.

WaterAid may terminate a Contract with a consultant, sub-contractor, partner, volunteer or supporter immediately and without prejudice to any claim for damages on giving written notice to the person/organisation if the person is in breach of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

Procedural fairness: WaterAid will apply procedural fairness to all stakeholders when responding to concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse or policy and code non-compliance.

7 Accountability

In line with WaterAid's Global Safeguarding Policy, safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and all staff and representatives will be held accountable. Ultimately each federation member's Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding measures are in place and are fit for purpose. This responsibility is delegated by the Boards of Directors to the Chief Executives of each member. WaterAid employs a professional Global Safeguarding Team who support safeguarding on a day to day basis across the federation ensuring awareness and consistency of safeguarding measures and policies.

8 Definitions

Child – WaterAid adopts the UNCRC definition of a child as anyone under the age of 18.

Child safeguarding – Preventative activities, initiatives and systems designed to safeguard children from any form of harm (including the risk of abuse and exploitation), or adverse impacts arising from their participation or interaction with programs and organisational operations.

Child abuse – is any action or inaction by another person that causes harm to a child. WaterAid recognises there are a number of categories of child abuse:

- **Physical abuse** – When a child is hurt or injured by an adult or another child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.
- **Emotional abuse** – The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child, or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem or social competence.
- **Neglect** – The persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.
- **Sexual abuse** – When a child is used, forced or enticed into taking part in sexual activities by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexual abuse involves contact and non-contact activities which encompasses all forms of sexual activity involving children, including exposing a child to online child sexual exploitation material, or taking sexually exploitative images or videos of children.
- **Bullying** – Usually includes one or all of the above defined categories of abuse and used as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time.
- **Exploitation** – The abuse of children and their rights, including one or more of the following:
 - committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child;
 - possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material;
 - committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming; and/or

- using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage for the benefit of others that are to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral and social-emotional development.
- **Racism** and other types of discrimination are also considered by WaterAid as forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse they can harm a child physically and emotionally.

Grooming - refers to behaviour that can be seen to manipulate a child into behaving in a particular way, especially behaviour that is used to coerce a child into sexual activity. Grooming often involves building a false sense of trust or creating secrecy around the relationship that the offender has with a child.

Indecent images of children - refer to sexual images, videos or pseudo-photographs of a child depicted nude or partially clothed, engaged in penetrative or non-penetrative sexual activity or posing sexually. This includes self-generated imagery taken by a child.

Access to children – Through our work there are many ways in which we come into contact with children. WaterAid has defined two categories in which contact could be made and they are:

- **Direct contact** is usually when there is face to face contact with a child, this may also include being within close proximity to a child or children. This can happen in a number of ways such as:
 - Delivery of safe water, sanitation and hygiene to a local community;
 - Field trips to local communities, schools and health centres;
 - Organised events;
 - Work experience in the office;
 - Film and photography; and
 - Research.
- **Indirect contact** is when you are not physically close to a child but may still have an ability to communicate or impact a child or group of children in some way, including via marketing and communications, or access to personal information via research and program activities. Indirect contact can happen in a number of ways such as:
 - Emails;
 - Social media (e.g. Facebook, twitter, YouTube);
 - Telephone;
 - Written communication on our website; and
 - Design of programme work.

8 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if there is a significant change in legislation and/or practice.

ANNEX A – Code of Conduct

WaterAid Australia Child Safe Code of Conduct

To be read and signed by all WaterAid Australia representatives.

WaterAid Australia is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and/or young people who may come in contact with WaterAid Australia Representatives. We support the rights of the child and will act to ensure a child safe environment is maintained. We encourage our staff, partners and volunteers to actively participate in building and maintaining a child safe environment.

I,----- [insert name], have read and understood WaterAid Australia's Child Safeguarding Policy and agree to adhere to the policy.

In particular, I will:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not share favouritism through the provision of gifts to children.
- Not give or provide children with alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the Australian Crimes Act 10914 (Cwlth) as amended), the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws.
- Wherever possible, ensure another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible.
- Use any computers or mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium (see also WaterAid's Ethical Photography Policy).
- Not use physical punishment on children.

- Refrain from hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or development stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Immediately disclose all charges, conviction and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during my association with WaterAid.
- Immediately report concerns or allegations in accordance with WaterAid's procedures.
- Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

In the use of children's images for work-related purposes, I must:

- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain informed consent from the child and a parent or guardian of the child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used, how long it will be kept and how the individual can ask for the photo/images to be removed.
- Ensure photographs or filming 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 file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending the file electronically.

I understand that the onus is on me, as a person engaged by WaterAid Australia, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse.

Signed:

Date: