

Child Safeguarding Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate HOME in PLACE Group's commitment to protect children from all harm and abuse.

In line with laws in each operating jurisdiction, and as a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, HOME in PLACE is obligated to have policies and procedures implemented which promote the safety and wellbeing of all children accessing its services and programs, in particular to minimise the risk of abuse of children.

The policy aims to educate directors, employees and others about child significant risk of harm and promote a child safe culture where everyone is committed to keep children safe.

In addition, the policy identifies the legislative requirements around mandatory reporting requirements for HOME in PLACE workers and our support partners including the requirement to report suspected significant risk of harm or neglect of a child to government authorities (in accordance to the legislation of the relevant jurisdiction).

For all jurisdictions in which HOME in PLACE and our support partners provide services to children, wholly or partly, HOME in PLACE's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children extends the obligation of all workers to report suspected child significant risk of harm or neglect to the relevant authorities in those jurisdictions as well as internally through HOME in PLACE secure online incident and reporting software, FOLIO.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all HOME in PLACE Directors, Committee Members, Workers, Associates, Partners, and Consultants (including researchers, photographers etc.) engaged on short or long term contracts to carry out national and international business activities on behalf of HOME in PLACE.

Associates' refers to others not included in the Definitions (section 7) of this policy for Directors, Committee Members and Workers and include visitors to our programs (including media), advisory group members, interns, supporters (donors, sponsors, advocates, ambassadors), trustees, members, Employees in consulting and partnership agencies, and any other individuals or groups that have been brought in contact with children (including their personal information and images) while working with and / or supporting HOME in PLACE.

Partners refer to local, state, national, regional, and international agencies that HOME in PLACE has an official arrangement with via signed MoU or Partnership Agreement or Contract, to implement or deliver HOME in PLACE Programs, Projects and Initiative in Australia and any part of the world.

3. Policy Statement

HOME in PLACE recognises that by the nature of work, our operations may pose a risk to children, therefore, this Child Safeguarding Policy has been developed to proactively identify and mitigate those risks.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safeguarding

HOME in PLACE is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. The rights of children, to be safe and cared for, is supported by HOME in PLACE and HOME in PLACE undertake to ensure a child safe environment is maintained.

Guiding Principles

HOME in PLACE believes that all children have the right to be safe at all times and acknowledges its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe from harm. HOME in PLACE will proactively work to provide safe and protective programs, activities, and environments.

The protection of children is the responsibility of all HOME in PLACE Directors, Committee Members, Workers, Associates and Partners carrying out national and international business activities on behalf of HOME in PLACE. HOME in PLACE will ensure that all Workers and relevant Stakeholders are made aware of HOME in PLACE Child Safeguarding Policy and their responsibilities.

HOME in PLACE also adopted DFAT's Five (5) Principles on Child Protection to guide HOME in PLACE's Child Safeguarding Policy and practices and incorporated them in the Children Safeguarding Policy (refer to Annexure 1). The Five (5) Principles are:

1. Zero tolerance of Child exploitation and abuse;
2. Assess and manage child protection risk and impact;
3. Sharing responsibility for child protection;
4. Procedural fairness; and
5. Recognising of the best interests of the child.

Context

Child significant risk of harm is a global problem that affects both boys and girls. It has existed since the beginning of time and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic, and social practices. Children are abused physically, sexually, emotionally and through neglect. There appears to also be strong evidence that child trafficking is an increasing criminal activity in many parts of the world.

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than others. Children living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children from minority groups, children living in residential care, children living in emergency or conflict situations, children on the move and children who are homeless or living with others who are homeless are often at higher risk of abuse than others.

Around the world children are forced to endure the most hazardous forms of child labour, girls are subjected to early enforced marriage, children are kidnapped and forced into armed conflict as soldiers or sexually exploited by combatants. Children are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation (including online) and experience severe corporal punishment in schools.

While most child significant risk of harm occurs within families and communities, children also experience abuse and exploitation in organisations which provide them with support and services. HOME in PLACE works with some of the most vulnerable of the world's children. The nature of our work means we are potentially at risk of being targeted by people who seek access to vulnerable children through our programs.

HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct (CoC)

HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct Policy (POL-028-04) is a clear organisational guide of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in relation to working with each other, our clients, suppliers, partners, and primary & major stakeholders as well as working with Children and young people. It provides common understanding of the standard of behaviour and the appropriate boundaries expected of HOME in PLACE's Personnel, Associates and Partners to keep children safe.

The HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct is provided to all HOME in PLACE Directors, Committee Members and Workers and acknowledged by them regardless of their contact with children. It is also incorporated in HOME in PLACE's MoU, Partnership Agreement and Contracts with partnering government & non-government organisations and local community groups.

The Code of Conduct includes an additional Code of Conduct (Safeguarding of children) Commitments that clearly sets out the expected behaviours for people who may have contact with and/or work directly with children. HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct is attached as Annexure 2 to this Policy.

Risk Assessment

Risk management is an ongoing part of our work involving and affecting children. In order to provide safe activities, programs, projects, and environments for children, HOME in PLACE conducts a child protection risk assessment on all activities, programs, projects, and initiatives, involving and affecting children either directly or indirectly, prior to commencement. Mitigation strategies are put in place for any risk identified and these (and any emerging risks) are actively monitored throughout the activity, program, project, and initiative cycle.

Workers and associates (as relevant) are trained in child safeguarding and risk assessment. They are expected to be continually aware of potential risks to children as well as to be actively minimising opportunities and situations where children can be harmed.

Child safeguarding elements are included in our organisational Risk Register which is monitored by HOME in PLACE's Group Executives and the Jurisdictional Boards and their subsequent Governing Advisory Committees.

Overview of Communication and Use of Children's Images Guideline

HOME in PLACE is committed to promoting and respecting the right of children to integrity, privacy and confidentiality and safety and to ensure a child safe environment. This commitment is extended to the communication and use of children's information and images by HOME in PLACE.

HOME in PLACE's Communication and Use of children's Information and Images Guideline is attached as Annexure 3.

Worker Recruitment, Selection and Training

HOME in PLACE is committed to child safe recruitment, selection, and screening practices and to educating Workers, Associates and Partners, in child protection, in assessing, mitigating, and preventing risks and creating child safe environments.

HOME in PLACE will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses a risk to children. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs.

HOME in PLACE will promote child safe practices that keep children safe in the organisation and in their own community and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work. This information will include reporting child significant risk of harm if they have concerns about a HOME in PLACE Worker, Associate or Partner or another representative in the organisation.

Our child safe practices including educating and training Workers, Associates and Partners are clearly stated in the HOME in PLACE's Worker Recruitment and Selection (Workers working directly or in contact with children) Guideline. Refer to Annexure 4.

Working with Partners

HOME in PLACE is committed to ensuring that any implementing partner is a child safe organisation by including Partners in the Scope of HOME in PLACE's Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) and incorporating HOME in PLACE Child Safeguarding Policy and HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct (including children safeguarding) in all MoU's, Partnership Agreements and Contracts and ensuring that our Partners - have effective CSP and practices in place to ensure child safety and child safe environment.

Our practices are to ensure our implementing partner is a child safe organisation are clearly stated in the HOME in PLACE's Working with Partners (Child Safeguarding) Guideline. Refer to Annexure 5.

Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Concerns

HOME in PLACE considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable and is committed to ensuring that Workers and Associates are aware of their legal and moral responsibilities to report suspected child significant risk of harm within and outside of the organisation.

It is mandatory for all HOME in PLACE's Workers, Associates and Partners to report any witnessed, suspected, or alleged incidents of child exploitation or abuse or any breach of this policy and / or HOME in PLACE Code of Conduct both internally through HOME in PLACE online Incident and Reporting platform (FOLIO), in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures, and to the relevant authorities.

These concerns may relate to a child or Worker involved in the organisation or a concern about a child or person/s outside of the organisation's programs.

HOME in PLACE is committed to implementing a reporting process which is clear, truthful, fair, and professional. HOME in PLACE will take all concerns and reports of child significant risk of harm seriously and act on these reports immediately.

HOME in PLACE Child significant risk of harm Reporting Procedure identifies:

- What to report;
- When to report;
- Who to report to;
- How to report; and
- What will happen next.

The HOME in PLACE Child significant risk of harm Reporting Process is attached as Annexure 6.

Responding to Disclosure by a Child.

HOME in PLACE has in place a child-friendly complaint handling process that includes access to support from appropriate support agencies and/or a person(s) who have undertaken relevant working with children training or equivalent. Refer to HOME in PLACE's - Child Friendly Complaint Handling Policy and PROC-012-02 Child Friendly Complaint Handling Procedure for information about this process.

Reporting Concerns (by Jurisdiction)

i. NSW (mandatory reporting)

In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. Mandatory Reporters include people who deliver residential services therefore HOME in PLACE is registered as a Mandatory Reporter with the NSW government and HOME in PLACE Workers must lodge

a mandatory eReport via the ChildStory 'Reporter Community' website maintained by the NSW government or by calling the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.

Registering

Mandatory reporters need to register to submit eReport. Once registered, mandatory reporters:

- Can create and submit eReports after using the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG), if the MRG outcome is "Report to Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)" or "refer to child Wellbeing Unit (CWU)."
- Will be notified by email when there is a change to status for report.
- Can log into the ChildStory Reporter Community website to see the status of any previous reports that have been submitted.

Making a report

Employees are to login to the Reporter Community via the login button on the page at the link below and complete the mandatory reporting guide (MRG) following the instructions on this page and submit the eReport.

Use the following link to access the Reporter Community webpage:

[Lodging an eReport via NSW Government ChildStory Reporter Community](#)

ii. Victoria

To make a report to child protection a person needs to have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and that their parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

Contact Child Protection

Where concerns relate to an alleged perpetrator of abuse, who may pose a risk more generally to all children, the concerns should be reported to Police.

In Victoria, reports to child protection must be made to a protective intervener, or other appropriately delegated officer. Reports cannot be made via the department's social media, website, or email, as staff who monitor the department's website are not delegated officers. Almost all reports are made to child protection by phone.

To make a report, you should contact child protection at the office that covers the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides.

Telephone numbers to make a report during business hours (8.45am to 5pm), Monday to Friday, are listed below.

North Division: 1300 598 521

South Division: 1300 555 526

East Division: 1300 360 452

West Division: 1300 360 462

If you're worried about a child's wellbeing, don't believe the child needs protection.

If you have significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where the immediate safety of the child will not compromise, a referral to The Orange Door (replacing Child FIRST) may be appropriate.

The Orange Door provides families assistance with the care and wellbeing of children, including those experiencing family violence, to contact the services they need to be safe and supported.

Referring to The Orange Door is appropriate where families are:

- experiencing significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development
- experiencing family conflict, including family breakdown under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability, or bereavement young, isolated, or unsupported experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact a child's care or development.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report.
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity as the reporter being disclosed.
- a court or tribunal decides it needs this information in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.
- a court or tribunal decides that in the interests of justice the evidence needs to be given.

iii. Western Australia

For immediate concerns: If you have a life-threatening concern about a child, contact the police on 000.

Concern for a child's wellbeing: If you are concerned about a child's wellbeing, please contact the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.

Crisis Care: Crisis Care provides Western Australia's after-hours response to reported concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing and information and referrals for people experiencing crisis.

Professional referrals: If you are a professional and want to report a concern about a child, please use the following link: <https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/referralform>.

iv. Queensland

For immediate concerns: If you have a life-threatening concern about a child, contact the police on 000.

If you have reason to suspect a child is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse, contact:
a Regional Intake Service (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) <https://www.dcssds.qld.gov.au/contact-us/department-contacts/child-family-contacts/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services>

the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 if outside business hours.

v. New Zealand

For immediate concerns: If you have a life-threatening concern about a child, contact the police on 111.

Making a report of concern

If you're worried about a tamaiti or rangatahi and want to make a report of concern or just have a general enquiry, our customer service specialists are on hand to answer your pātai and pass you through to the right area to help you out. They can be contacted on: 0508 326 459 or email contact@ot.govt.nz
Following your report, a social worker will review your information and determine what supports would be best as a next step for your concern.

Failure to Disclose Child Sexual Abuse Offence.

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in any Jurisdiction by an adult against a child under 16 years of age must report that information to police.

Policy Review and Audit

It is imperative that HOME in PLACE's Child Safeguarding Policy is a relevant and current document. It is also extremely important to monitor and assess the effectiveness of our policy implementation.

HOME in PLACE's Group Executive Manager Governance (GEMG) will ensure this policy is reviewed Biannually. The review will include consultations with HOME in PLACE's Workers, Associates, Partners, and Primary stakeholders such as, children and young people, as well as other stakeholders. Any change made to the Policy will be reviewed and approved by the Group Managing Director.

In addition, HOME in PLACE undertakes an annual self-audit of the HOME in PLACE Child Safeguarding Policy implementation across HOME in PLACE operations as well as its Partners, in order to review adherence to our child safeguarding policies and standards as part of the Australian Council for International Development reporting requirements.

Procedure:

HOME in PLACE's GEMG will review this policy on a regular basis, at least every two years and confirmation of internal compliance with this policy will be undertaken at least once annually.

Awareness of the policy will be included in the induction process, to be read by all new employees and volunteers.

Refresher training will be regularly organised to present the policy to Workers and keep them updated on any changes.

Legislation and Compliance (by Jurisdiction)

HOME in PLACE complies with legislative requirements for mandatory reporting, as it relates to our organisation.

NSW

In NSW, HOME in PLACE is a mandatory reporter and mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act). HOME in PLACE Workers are expected to report child safety concerns to their immediate Supervisor through the online Incident and Reporting Platform (FOLIO) in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures.

Queensland

In Queensland, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Child Protection Act 1999 and whilst HOME in PLACE is not a mandatory reporter under Queensland legislation HOME in PLACE Workers are expected to report any concerns to their immediate Supervisor where "they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them." through the online Incident and Reporting Platform (FOLIO) in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures.

Victoria

In Victoria, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and whilst HOME in PLACE is not a mandatory reporter under Victoria legislation HOME in PLACE Workers are expected to report any concerns to their immediate Supervisor where "they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering of significant harm caused by physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional or intellectual development, physical development or health and/or abandonment or parental incapacity" through the online Incident and Reporting Platform (FOLIO) in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures.

Western Australia

In Western Australia, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Child and Community Services Act 2004, and whilst HOME in PLACE is not a mandatory reporter under Western Australian legislation, Home in Place Workers are expected to report any concerns to their immediate Supervisor where "there is

reasonable belief that sexual abuse and other types of abuse including physical abuse, neglect and psychological harm has occurred" through the online Incident and Reporting Platform (FOLIO) in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures.

New Zealand

In New Zealand, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children's and Young People's Well-being Act 1989), and whilst HOME in PLACE is not a mandatory reporter under New Zealand legislation, HOME in PLACE Workers staff are directed to report the abuse or likely abuse to a Statutory Agency, Police or the Child, Youth and Family Services. A HOME in PLACE worker is expected to report any concerns to their immediate Supervisor where "any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually) ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived" through the online Incident and Reporting Platform (FOLIO) in line with HOME in PLACE reporting procedures.

HOME in PLACE have an obligation under the Crimes Amendment Act 2019 to take all reasonable steps to protect a child or vulnerable adult and therefore, must take reasonable steps if they become aware that the child is at risk of death, grievous bodily harm, or sexual harm.

Under the Children's Act 2014 Organisations receiving government funding and providing services linked to child safety have an obligation to have a child protection policy and take steps to prevent child significant risk of harm and ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

4. Responsibilities

All HOME in PLACE workers have an obligation to:

- familiarise themselves with and ensure they have a clear understanding of HOME in PLACE policies and procedures,
- observe and implement such policies, and associated procedures in delivering services to HOME in PLACE clients,
- inform HOME in PLACE's clients of the impact of this policy on them and assist them to understand their rights and obligations, as required,
- identify issues that require amendment to this policy document and complete the relevant documentation to propose any amendments, and
- report breaches of HOME in PLACE's policies or procedures.

The relevant Group Executive Manager is ultimately responsible to:

- ensure all stakeholders within their area of responsibility are informed about HOME in PLACE Policies and Procedures,
- ensure appropriate processes and controls are implemented to enable the correct application of and adherence to relevant policies and procedures, and

- ensure appropriate processes and controls are implemented to enable breaches of approved HOME in PLACE's Policy and Procedures to be reported and managed.

5. Implementation and Review

This policy is listed on HOME in PLACE's Controlled Documents Register and is a controlled document requiring approval of any changes. It may not be amended or shared outside HOME in PLACE without approval. The policy is reviewed regularly and published on HOME in PLACE's SharePoint intranet once approved. Employees receive communications and training on new and reviewed policies and procedures.

HOME in PLACE complies with relevant contractual compliance obligations and jurisdictional laws and regulations when implementing this policy. Confirmation of internal compliance with this policy is undertaken regularly.

It is the responsibility of HOME in PLACE Group Executive Services to maintain and update the HOME in PLACE's Master Policy Document, Policy Directory and the Policy Review Register, administer the review and approval process and inform and distribute new and amended policies and procedures once approved (refer PROC-011 Policy and Procedure Development Approval).

HOME in PLACE Workers should refer to SharePoint Company Documents Policy and Procedure site for the latest version which takes precedent over any uncontrolled version. If this document is printed, downloaded, or saved elsewhere from this site it becomes an uncontrolled version. For further information contact the Responsible Officer listed under Document Information.

6. Resources and related documents

Related documents

- POL-028-04 Code of Conduct Policy
- POL-028 Workplace Relations Policy Manual
- POL-019 Privacy Policy

Complaint Handling Policy and Procedures

- POL-012 Complaint Handling Policy
- PROC-012-01 Complaint Handling Procedure
- PROC-012-02 Child Friendly Complaint Handling Procedure
- POL-8012 External Complaint Handling Policy (NZ)
- PROC-8012 External Complaint Handling Procedure (NZ)

Related legislation/standard

National

- [Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission Act 2012](#)
- [Corporations Act 2001](#)
- [National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2008](#)

New South Wales

- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998 \(the Care Act\)](#)

Queensland

- [Child Protection Act 1999](#)

Victoria

- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)
- [Crimes Act 1958](#)

Western Australia

- [Children and Community Services Act 2004](#)

New Zealand

- [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 \(Children and Young People's Well-being Act 1989\)](#)
- [Children's Act 2014](#)
- [Crimes Amendment Act 2019](#)

7. Definitions

For the glossary of definition for Home in Place QMS documents please click on the link: [Definitions Table Group and Australia](#)

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