

Concern Australia

Child Safety and Protection Policy

Table of Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	3
3. Related Documents	3
4. External related standards / legislation	4
5. Definitions	5
6. Responsibilities	11
7. Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection- Statement of Commitment	12
8. Child Safety and Protection – Statement of Commitment	13
9. Parents and Carers – Statement of Commitment	13
10. Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection - Code of Conduct	14
11. Standards	14
11.1 Guiding principles	15
11.2 Organisational Culture of Child Safety	15
11.3 Organisational commitment to Child Safety and Protection	16
11.4 Organisational expectations for appropriate behaviour with children	17
11.5 Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices	18
• Recruitment and Selection	18
• Working with Children	19
• Supervision, training and other resources practices	19
11.6 Reporting and responding to abuse	21
11.7 Risk Management to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse	22
11.8 Participation and empowerment of children	23
12. Support for Concern Australia Workers	24
13. Signed Acceptance by incoming worker members	26

1. Purpose

Concern Australia is committed to providing child safe and protected environments in all its activities and programs and has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse or exploitation. Contact and working with children is a critical responsibility. Children have the right to be safe and protected.

This policy describes the overarching set of standards by which Concern Australia maintains its commitment to being a child safe organisation.

Concern Australia workers must be fully aware and knowledgeable of this Policy and related procedures, whether or not they work directly with children.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all workers at Concern Australia including but not limited, to: All workers, including contractors, volunteers and organisational representatives.

3. Related Documents

- Concern Australia Core Values
- Concern Australia Code of Conduct
- HR PO-003 Recruitment and selection policy
- HR PO-005 Induction Policy
- HR PD-001 Recruitment and Selection - CA employee
- HR PD-002 Recruitment and Selection CA Volunteer- Student Placements
- HR PD-003 Recruitment and Selection CA Lead Tenant Volunteer
- HR PO-007 Supervision Procedure
- HR PO-008 Performance Improvement Procedure
- GLF PO - 001 Risk Management Policy
- GLF PD-001 Risk Management Procedure
- GLF PD-002 Quality Improvement & Incident Record
- CS PO-002 Client Participation Policy
- CS PO-001 Client Feedback Policy
- GLF PO-007 Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Policy
- Police Check Policy (under HR PO-001 Recruitment and Selection Policy)
- WWC (under HR PO-001 Recruitment and Selection Policy)
- TS PO-009 Complaints, Appeals & Disciplinary Policy - Learning Alliance

4. External related standards / legislation

- Child Safe Standard - State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, November 2015.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Victorian Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Section 49B, 49C, 327
- Council of Australian Government (COAG) National
- Framework for Protecting Australian's Children 2009-2020
- Young and Families Act 2005
- Child Protection Manual – 1 December 2015 - DHHS
- Victorian Government, Cultural Responsiveness: Guidelines for Victorian Health Services (2009)
- Privacy Act 2013

5. Definitions

Aboriginal child	<p>A person under the age of 18 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent• identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and <p>Is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.</p>
Bullying	<p>Repeated and unwanted, aggressive and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or group that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.</p> <p>Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviours and can involve a range of behaviours over time.</p> <p>Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.</p> <p>Bullying does not include reasonable management action taken with regard to performance management matters.</p>
Child abuse	<p>For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• physical violence• sexual abuse• emotional abuse• neglect
Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	<p>A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.¹</p>
Child, children, young people	<p>For the purposes of this document, a child or young person refers to any individual less than 18 years of age.</p>

¹ Victorian Government, *Cultural Responsiveness: Guidelines for Victorian Health Services* (2009) http://www.health.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/381068/cultural_responsiveness.pdf

Child safety	In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
Child safe organisation	In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
Cultural competency	A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. ²
Cultural abuse	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community. ³
Cultural safety for aboriginal children	<p>The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning• have an education that strengthens their culture and identity• maintain connections to their land and country• maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations• be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders• receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner• be involved in services that are culturally respectful.⁴
Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. ⁵ Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.

² Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework 2008:

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal_cultural_competence_2008.pdf

³ Aboriginal Cultural competence Framework 2008

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal_cultural_competence_2008.pdf

⁴ Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, 2010, *Building Respectful Partnerships*

⁵ Williams, R. 1999, 'Cultural Safety – what does it mean for our work practice?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, Vol 23, Issue 2, p213-214.

Children with a disability

A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities.⁶ A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.⁷

Emotional or psychological abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

Grooming

The Victorian Government provides the following definition of grooming⁸:

'The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

The offence applies where an adult communicates, by word or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult. Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences such as 'up skirting' and "indecent behaviour in public."

Grooming behavior can also be targeted towards the parent, carer or other person who has a supervisory role towards the child with the intention of garnering the carer's trust to facilitate access to the child.

Concern Australia provides the following additional guidance in defining and understanding grooming behaviour⁹:

Behaviour is seen as 'grooming' where there is evidence of a **pattern of conduct** that is consistent with preparing the alleged victim for sexual activity and that there is no other reasonable explanation for it.

⁶ s 3 *Disability Act 2006*.

⁷ Department of Health and Human Services, [About disability](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/disability-in-victoria/about-disability), <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/disability-in-victoria/about-disability>

⁸ Betrayal of Trust: Factsheet. The new 'grooming offence' sourced from: <http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/df7994c3-9238-4de5-9ff1-a5c0cf79a7fa/grooming.pdf>

⁹ Source NSW Ombudsman (2013) 'Defining Reportable Conduct: Child Protection Practice Update 2013', July, Sydney, NSW Ombudsman, viewed 20 January 2014, http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/5620/PU_CP_02_11_Reportable_Conduct_v3.pdf

- Harm** Harm, to a Child or Young Person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Child or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by
- physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - sexual abuse or exploitation;
 - a single act, omission or circumstance; or
 - a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
- Neglect** Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.
- Physical abuse** Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
- Organisation¹⁰** The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:
- an incorporated body or association
 - an unincorporated body or association (however structured)
 - an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, workers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.

¹⁰ An individual who carries on a business but does not engage contractors, workers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities will be required to comply with the child safe standards when the individual belongs to a class prescribed by regulation.

Reasonable belief As per the Victorian Government definition¹¹, a 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;
- observations of the child's behaviour, including changes in behaviour, physical injuries or symptoms consistent with sexual activity/abuse, or observations of the child's development leads you to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- indicators of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- in the case of grooming, an observation of a pattern of conduct of an adult towards a child (or a child's parents/guardians) with the purpose of gaining access to the child either for themselves or another person.

Risk A Child or Young person is at risk of harm if harm has not yet occurred but is likely to occur in the future, given risk factors identified in the present. A Child or Young person may be assessed as in need of protection if the level of future risk is identified as likely (probable), not just possible (may occur); the probable harm will have a significant detrimental effect on the Child or Young Person if it does occur; and there is not a parent able and willing to protect the Child or Young Person from future significant harm.

Sexual abuse Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the child's parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Sexual assault Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual behaviour or activity that makes the victim feel uncomfortable, frightened or threatened. It is sexual activity that the person has not consented to and refers to a broad range of sexual behaviours, including the use or threat of violence to force another person to engage in a sexual activity against their will.

Sexual assault is a serious crime, commonly committed by men against women and children.

¹¹ Sourced from: <http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/ea484f74-feb7-400e-ad68-9bd0be8e2a40/failure+to+disclose.pdf>

Sexual exploitation	<p>Sexual exploitation occurs when Children or Young People are forced into sexual. Activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos whether published on the internet or not.</p> <p>Exploitation can also involve Children or Young People who are forced into prostitution.</p>
Volunteer	<p>Any person who contributes time, service and skills to assist in accomplishing the organisation's mission without expectation of financial gain from Concern Australia. This would include people who engage in service for spiritual, personal, humanitarian, educational, and/or charitable reasons.</p> <p>This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee/advisory board members,• Ongoing volunteers,• Lead tenants• Student placements, and• Corporate volunteers
Workers or / organisational representative	<p>Within the context of this policy, 'worker or organisational representative' is a generic term used to refer to any individual working for or under the banner of Concern Australia in any Department, social programs and business units, including but not restricted to workers, contractors and volunteers.</p>

6. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all workers at Concern Australia including but not limited, to: All workers, contractors, sub-contractors and organisational representative.

- to provide for and promote the care, protection and wellbeing of Children or Young People in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and the right to be protected from Harm, and to maximise opportunities for Children or Young People to realise their full potential
- to provide for and promote the provision of services that foster the health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity of Children or Young People by ensuring that persons responsible for Children or Young People within the organisation are appropriately performing their responsibilities
- to promote caring attitudes and responses towards Children or Young People, so that the need for appropriate nurture, care and protection is understood, risks to a Child’s wellbeing are quickly identified, and any necessary support, protection or care is promptly provided
- to recognise the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of Children or Young People and to accord high priority to supporting and assisting the family to carry out its responsibilities to Children or Young People
- to promote and recognise the need to strengthen, preserve and promote positive relationships between the Child and the Child’s parent, family members, leaders, mentors, spiritual advisors and significant others.

<p>Board Members / CEO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the Concern Australia commitment to the Child Safety and Protection Policy • support and review on an annual cycle as a minimum, of the Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection Policy or at a time governed by legislation, regulations or organisational learnings that requires a change to the Child Safety and Protection Policy • develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to Child Safety and Protection • advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy.
<p>CEO / Business Operations Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the Child Safety and Protection Policy is implemented • ensure all People understand their obligations in accordance with the Child Safety and Protection Policy • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation • advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy • proactively share resources and experience in the development of Child safe and protection initiatives as they are identified • develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child protection. • Promote Child safety and protection guidelines in the organisation

Concern Australia Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocate and promote Child rights, empowering and engaging Children or Young People in support of this Policy • develop opportunities for regular discussion to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of Child safety and protection.
All workers / Organisational Representatives	Adhere to Child Safety and Protection Policy

7. Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection- Statement of Commitment

Concern Australia’s values of faith, integrity, respect, belonging, passion and the organisational commitment to providing child safe program environments and responding efficiently and fairly to reports of abuse or issues arising that are counter to the organisation’s standards and expectations.

Concern Australia’s commitment to Child Safety aims to:

- ensure all programs, activities and services provided for and by Concern Australia are safe for children
- ensure that all children are respected and valued, irrespective of their age, gender, cultural heritage or ability, and are empowered to voice their concerns about abuse
- ensure that all workers within Concern Australia, including workers are safe and that they understand and take seriously their commitment to comply with the Keeping Children Safe Standard
- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power by workers within the organisation
- ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled in a consistent, unbiased and thorough manner.

The Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection Commitment:

- acknowledges the rights to children as detailed in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children*; that States shall protect children from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” (Article 19)
- complies with state legislation and funding body requirements as they apply, but not limited, to the;
 - reporting of abuse
 - recruitment and screening of people working with children
 - provision of a child safe environment.

8. Child Safety and Protection – Statement of Commitment

Concern Australia is committed to:

- provide a safe service environment for all children, regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity
- place the safety and well-being of children as its paramount concern
- ensuring zero tolerance or condoning or abuse of any kind within any of its operations or by any person working under or in the name of Concern Australia
- take all allegations and/or disclosures of sexual and/or physical abuse seriously, whether they are recent or historical, and will report such allegations to police and other statutory authorities as required
- continually work towards fostering a culture of openness that supports and empowers safe disclosure of abuse, and fosters transparent and accessible communication between Concern Australia representatives and all who access or are engaged in its services, programs and activities
- continually work to provide the safest possible programs and environments for children through identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm
- ensure all workers and volunteers who work with children are recruited and screened with regard to their suitability for that responsibility as per Concern Australia policies and procedures
- building the capacity of all people working under or in the name Concern Australia to recognise and respond to situations of abuse and to be aware of their responsibilities
- undertake regular reviews of its policies and procedures to ensure it meets and complies with the above commitments.

9. Parents and Carers – Statement of Commitment

- we are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their Children or Young People
- we will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their Children or Young People
- we are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their Children or Young People if it is consistent with the paramount concern to protect the Child or Young Person from harm and promote the Child or Young Person's development
- we aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of Children or Young people
- we will seek to involve parents whenever possible and practicable in the decision-making process that impact on them and the Children or Young People
- we will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling families of Children or Young People who have experienced abuse and any other family in the community who may indirectly be affected by an incident.

10. Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection - Code of Conduct

Concern Australia has reviewed the Code of Conduct Policy and has included clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and boundaries for anyone interacting with children as well as promoting safe, positive and child friendly environments. The Code of Conduct is relevant and applicable to all Concern Australia workers.

Concern Australia expects all Concern Australia workers to be fully aware of and; exhibit behaviour that are in line with the Code of Conduct, whether or not they work with children.

The Concern Australia Code of Conduct describes the specific standards and expectations of conduct required of all workers working with children within Concern Australia and the mechanisms for reporting and managing breaches of the code.

It is required that all workers within Concern Australia will be:

- provided with a copy of the Concern Australia Code of Conduct as part of their induction. A signed copy of this Code will be retained in personnel records
- provided with training to facilitate understanding of the Concern Australia expectations in relation to working with children.

The Concern Australia Code of Conduct will be published and communicated to all workers to ensure they understand their responsibilities.

11. Standards

Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that its services, programs and people are safe for all children. Concern Australia Child Safety and protection Standards are based on the fundamental principle that every child who participates in the activities of Concern Australia has a right to be free from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harassment and bullying. Concern Australia is committed to being a child safe and child friendly organisation, where children and young people feel respected, safe, valued and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Concern Australia's position as a child safe organisation is not simply to create an environment that minimises risk or danger. Rather it is about building an environment which is both child-safe and child-friendly, where children and young people are valued and feel respected and encouraged to reach their full potential.

11.1 Guiding principles

Concern Australia's commitment as a child safety and protection organisation for all children regardless of age, gender, ability, cultural or linguistic background, is founded on the following principles:

- zero tolerance of child abuse
- providing a child safe and child friendly organisational culture
- recognition of the rights of children
- child protection and safety is a shared responsibility
- a structured and responsive approach to risk management is employed
- Concern Australia leadership within all levels of the organisation endorse and commit to the Keeping Children Safe Standards
- provide appropriate and accessible information about Children's rights and how they can raise concerns about abuse
- all clients are encouraged and supported to take up opportunities to provide feedback on their individual experience.

11.2 Organisational Culture of Child Safety

As a child safe organisation, Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that:

- the wellbeing and safety of children is a paramount concern
- a culture of child safety is actively endorsed and promoted at all levels of Concern Australia, and is embedded in organisational culture, strategic direction, organisational goals, policies and procedures. Reporting of concerns for child safety or abuse is encouraged and supported
- the responsibility for the care and protection of children is the responsibility of all people engaged by the Concern Australia, whether or not they work with children
- the CEO has been nominated as the "Child Safety Representative" and is appropriately trained and supported to promote Child Safety and protection guidelines in the organisation
- a culture exists of supporting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, and with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and valuing and including people and practices that meet the needs of these children. A culture exists of valuing and supporting children with a disability.

Indicators of compliance

- clear and transparent arrangements for leadership to be made aware of child safety issues.
- all people engaged with Concern Australia are aware of their responsibilities under the organisation's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- openness, transparency, and active follow up of any concerns or reports of abuse are encouraged throughout the organisation

- all people engaged with Concern Australia are aware that the need to protect children from abuse and harm underpins Concern Australia work with children
- all people engaged with Concern Australia's are aware of legislative and organisational requirements for the notification and reporting of abuse
- all people support cultural safety for Aboriginal children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and value and include people and practices that meet the needs of these children. All people value and support children with a disability
- information about Concern Australia's Child Safety approach and commitment is available to all people and is clearly visible in Concern Australia approved communication platforms and at Concern Australia all sites.

11.3 Organisational commitment to Child Safety and Protection

As a child safe organisation, Concern Australia has developed a Statement and set of Policies and Procedures to protect children from abuse. These documents provide key elements of the organisation's approach to being child safe.

Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that:

- a culture of child safety and Cultural safety for Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and safety for children with a disability is endorsed and promoted at all levels of Concern Australia, and is embedded in organisational culture, strategic direction, organisational goals, policies and procedures
- the Child Safety and Protection Statement affirms the organisation is committed to a zero tolerance for child abuse
- we provide specific guidelines on appropriate behaviour with children
- children are provided with information on child safety, and how they can report concerns or abuse
- we are acting in children's best interests and are keeping them safe, and actively working to empower children
- all workers are responsible for acting to protect children. This duty of care extends to the Concern Australia board, management, worker, contractors and student placements
- Concern Australia policies, procedures and practice reflect a culture of child safety and protection.

Indicators of compliance

- the organisation has a Child Safety and Protection Policy
- child safety considerations are imbedded in other policies and procedures, meetings, documents and processes in the organisation
- the organisation is committed to child safety. This includes a commitment to the safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically backgrounds and children with a disability
- the Statement has been communicated and is embedded throughout the organisation
- all board members and other workers are aware of the organisation's commitment to child safety.

11.4 Organisational expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

As a child safe organisation, the Concern Australia Code of Conduct sets a benchmark for acceptable standards and expectation of the behaviour for all people working with or in contact with children participating in activities with Concern Australia, as well as promoting safe, positive and child friendly environments.

The child safety and protection policies have been designed to facilitate decision making in relation to the protection of Children or Young People. At all times, we expect Concern Australia workers to have a comprehensive understanding of the contents of this Policy and the relevant policies and abide by them whenever they have concerns about the possibility that a Child or Young person has experienced or may be at risk of experiencing harm.

Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that:

- the wellbeing and safety of children is a paramount concern
- recruitment and induction processes ensure workers are screened, and informed of their responsibilities to ensure child safety and protection
- a culture of child safety and protection is actively endorsed and promoted at all levels of Concern Australia, and is embedded in organisational culture, policy and procedure
- the responsibility for the care and protection of children is the responsibility of all people engaged by Concern Australia, whether or not they work with children.

Indicators of compliance

- all workers have read and signed the Code of Conduct as part of induction process for new worker and as part of annual performance appraisals for all existing workers
- all workers, regardless of whether or not they work with children, will undertake the minimum Concern Australia Child Safe endorsed training requirements. This is a component of the induction process for new worker and ongoing performance review for existing worker. Compliance with training requirements will be coordinated and tracked through the HR Department.

11.5 Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices.

- **Recruitment and Selection**

Concern Australia has Policies and Procedures to ensure all candidates for roles as workers and other people who are engaged to work for and on behalf of Concern Australia are appropriately screened and recruited with reference to the inherent requirements of positions, and ensuring the prospective candidates are appropriately screened, they are informed of standards and policies and are trained/inducted in Child safety and protection practices. See Concern Australia “Recruitment and Selection” Policy and Procedure.

Concern Australia Recruitment and selection processes for workers include but are not limited to:

- detailing personal contact details, relevant and past experience
- national police check
- working with Children Check (as specified under state legislation)
- reference checks
- interviewed by the Line Manager and HR representative
- all new workers, regardless of whether or not they work with children, will undertake the minimum Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection training.

There are three main reasons for conducting police checks and WWCC for all workers in Concern Australia. The Police checks are conducted to provide protection for the young people, the workers and Concern Australia.

- **Protection for the Young People**

Concern Australia workers aim to provide a safe environment where children under 18 of age feel protected, accepted, cared for and esteemed. It is Concern Australia workers’ responsibility to care for Young People by protecting them from anything that may be harmful whilst in or care. In our best effort to protect these Young People, we need to offer them the best workers, who are dedicated to providing high quality care on behalf of Concern Australia.

- **Protection for the Workers**

Concern Australia will ensure that all workers are suited to their position and, as part of the team, want to provide the best possible care for the young people. The implementation of police checking demonstrates our commitment and support for adequate care and prevention of insecure and dangerous environments for young people. Police checking will help to detect, deter or make it unlikely to have undesirable or inappropriate people engaging in work with young people in Concern Australia. Police checking and adequate screening of potential Concern Australia worker protects the worker’s self-esteem and the reputation and effectiveness of the whole team.

- **Protection for Concern Australia**

It is an unfortunate fact of life that some people are not suited for work with children. Police checks are expected by the community as an effective procedure in screening suitable applications for working with children. Concern Australia has a moral and legal responsibility to minimise the risk of potential abusive situations, by adequately screening to Concern Australia workers through the police checking procedure.

- **Working with Children**

All candidates and workers will be informed during their recruitment that their employment or volunteer services will be subject to clearance under the Working with Children Check system (or equivalent checks under other state legislation). It is a serious breach of this Policy if an individual, who has convictions that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance, gains employment or is allowed to volunteer with Children or Young people who access our services. It is also a serious breach of this Policy, if an individual continues in his/her employment or volunteer role with us if he/she has been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance. Workers who have been charged or convicted of a crime that would make him/her ineligible to be granted a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) clearance have an ongoing obligation to inform to HR Department will deal appropriately with this by removing the person from employment or volunteering service.

Concern Australia will ensure that confidentiality is a priority. Police check notifications, WWCC assessment notices and all correspondence with applicants will be held in a locked cabinet and electronically with restricted access.

- **Supervision, training and other resources practices**

Concern Australia line managers are responsible for ensuring all workers within the organisation are equipped with the necessary information and knowledge to ensure they comply with organisational policy and procedure related to keeping children safe, and the management of risk associated with child abuse and their legislative and organisational reporting and notification requirements.

This will be achieved through various means including, but not limited to:

- induction processes
- Concern Australia Child Safe policy and procedure training
- Concern Australia specific or Concern Australia approved and accredited external contracted training on understanding what child abuse is including indicators of abuse, how to respond to allegations of abuse, perpetrator behaviour
- supervision: line managers, across all Concern Australia sites and social programs are responsible for providing opportunities for worker engaged in the delivery of services and activities to children to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding required for child safe environments. Any issues are also highlighted and addressed
- this requires regular ongoing supervision with the frequency based on the assessed level of professional capacity and risk, according to Concern Australia Management Policy.

Indicators of Compliance

- all workers complete satisfactory integrity checks prior to appointment, and relevant reference data is retained as per policy directives. All workers meet standards in relation to National Police Checks, and have current Working with Children Checks
- all workers, regardless of whether or not they work with children, have read and signed the Concern Australia Code of Conduct as part of the induction process for new workers and as part of annual performance appraisals for all existing workers
- all workers, regardless of whether or not they work with children, will undertake the minimum Concern Australia Child Safe endorsed training requirements
- supervision process includes Child Safety as part of the evaluation/review process
- all workers know how to ensure the cultural safety of and engage safely with aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

11.6 Reporting and responding to abuse

Experiences of harm are significant sources of trauma for Children or Young People and intensify the risk of Children or Young People developing a range of emotional, psychological, social and behavioural problems. Child physical abuse and sexual abuse is a crime. Intervention which identifies and prevents abuse from occurring is instrumental in supporting Children or Young People and families. When abuse has occurred, it is imperative that action is taken to protect Children or Young People from further experiences of abuse. Where there is a risk of harm, it is also imperative that action is taken to protect the Child or Young Person from that risk eventuating. We expect all workers to know how to define harm, be aware of its indicators and understand its consequences. The more informed we are, the more effective we will be in our efforts to protect Children or Young People from all forms of harm.

Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that:

- will take seriously any concerns or issues raised by Children, Young People and/or their parents. We will investigate all complaints or allegations made against any of Concern Australia workers. We will ensure that we promptly report any suspected, alleged or reported crimes against Children, Young People or other family members to the police or other authorised body in accordance with the policies and operational procedures of the Concern Australia at a local level. We expect all workers to follow our complaints procedure without hesitation in response to concerns raised by Children, Young People and/or their parents/carers
- will not tolerate or condone abuse of any kind within any of its operations or by any person working under or in the name of Concern Australia
- will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment, discrimination or bullying
- takes the issues of abuse, harassment, discrimination and/or bullying seriously
- has policies and procedures to provide a supportive environment for children, personnel or families who report allegations of abuse or child safety concerns. Children are provided with information on how to report abuse. (e.g. Client handbook, induction, information or welcome packs as per program specific processes)
- has policies and procedures that describe how workers, families and children will respond to and report abuse (physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect) to the appropriate authorities. ([see Policy: Reporting Suspected Child Abuse Policy GLF PO-003](#))
- workers are aware of their legal and organisational responsibilities in relation to reporting of such issues
- encourages anyone who believes they, or another person has been subject to abuse, harassment, discrimination and/or bullying to raise the matter with a senior member of Concern Australia and/or the nominated Concern Australia “Child Safety and Protection Representative”
- all allegations of abuse, whether recent or historical, must be reported to the police and other statutory authority as required under state legislation (e.g. Child Protection, Disability client services’ Education department) and organisational policy and procedure directives
- all workers are trained on identifying risk factors associated with sexual and physical abuse and how to protect a child in the case of an allegation
- all workers are trained on how to report abuse to the appropriate authorities

- all workers understand their responsibilities in relation to relevant Concern Australia policy and procedures.

Indicators of compliance

- all workers are aware of their legislative reporting requirements. Including reporting to DHHS and Police
- all workers have received training and information on Concern Australia policy and procedure related to responding and reporting abuse, and know how to report abuse to the appropriate authorities
- all workers know the procedure to record reports of abuse, and where to store these reports. (QIR and/or Critical Incident Reports)
- Concern Australia provides information and resources to children, young People and their families about the organisations Child Safe Standards and related policy and procedures, including how to make a complaint
- Concern Australia reviews and follows up all incidents and reports of abuse to drive continuous improvement in service delivery to children and families.

11.7 Risk Management to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse

Concern Australia is committed to managing risk of abuse. The benefits the approach Organisation and manages the child safety risk(s) based on a range of factors including the nature of the activities with children. Within the risk management approach, Concern Australia has developed policies and procedures for usual activities and special events, all those activities are part of the organizations' recognition of the legal responsibilities that ensure the safety of children.

Concern Australia has developed its Risk Management Policy to:

- formalise its commitment to incorporating the principles of risk management into all aspects of the Organisation, to ensure the safety of children
- provide a consistent Organisational wide approach to risk management
- encourage the concept that risk and risk management is a positive attribute in decision making and Program and Corporate governance, and
- align and integrate risk management with the Organisation's other quality management and planning activities that involve children.

Indicators of compliance

- all workers have received training and information about risk the management approach which includes policy and procedure for identifying, evaluating, mitigating or removing risks related to Child Safety.

- is embedded at all levels the organisation
- is accepted at all levels of the organisation
- is an integral part of all of CA's processes
- forms part of decision making
- explicitly addresses uncertainty
- is systemic, structured and timely
- is based on the best available information
- is tailored to the organisation
- takes human and cultural factors into account
- is transparent and inclusive
- is dynamic, iterative and responsive to change
- line managers identify risks when supervising workers and make plans for working with children that reduce risk of abuse and exposure to abuse.
- facilitates continual improvement and enhancement of the organisation work with and response to children, ensuring Child Safety and Protection.
- recognise and address risks to Aboriginal children, children from culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds or children with disability.

11.8 Participation and empowerment of children

Concern Australia is committed to offering quality and effective service delivery to Children using our services. Concern Australia recognises that to achieve this objective and meet the needs of children, processes need to be available for children and their families to input and provide advice about services that Concern Australia delivers or could offer. Concern Australia values children and families views, and aims to facilitate their participation. We aim to consult with children and their families to identify and address barriers to participation in our services and to improve our service offering.

Concern Australia recognises that some groups of children, for example Aboriginal children, children of linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities, are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations. Concern Australia will aim to ensure children and families are respected for their culture, and that communication is appropriate to the needs of children from these communities.

Concern Australia is aware that abuse is more common in organisations where children have no voice. Concern Australia is committed to ensuring that children have a voice and are empowered to use it to express their concerns and to enhance the organisations child safe and friendly environment.

As part of our commitment to Children or Young People, we will facilitate opportunities for Children or Young People to tell us their views and feedback about the services we provide to them. We will treat Children or Young People as individuals and respect their unique abilities and vulnerabilities. We expect all workers to express attitudes and engage in behaviour that respect and support Children or Young People.

This will be achieved through various means including, but not limited to:

- children will be given regular opportunities to provide feedback, suggestions, express concerns or report any abuse. (eg. House meetings, one to one conversations with youth workers, trainers, client feedback forms, etc)
- children are provided with and/or have access to opportunities to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe practices. Children have the opportunity to get access to information about their rights and how to raise concerns about abuse or suspected abuse. This will be provided in the form of client handbooks, welcome packs, and through verbal communication from the program workers. Concern Australia uses language and communication strategies that are culturally sensitive and appropriate to Aboriginal children, children of linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and will involve people from these communities in communication with them, and to provide expertise and support
- Concern Australia will provide information that is understandable and meets the needs of children with disabilities when required
- all Concern Australia workers are trained in methods of empowering children and encouraging children's active participation in all Concern Australia programs
- feedback given from children and their families will be reviewed and utilised in quality improvement for the organisation and its service delivery to children.

Indicators of compliance

- children and Young People are aware of their rights and responsibilities when engaged in Concern Australia programs and activities
- children and Young People know how to (and feel supported) in reporting abuse or concerns
- all Concern Australia sites have key Child Safe information (e.g. Code of Conduct, how to make a complaint, client feedback processes) that is accessible to all people.

12. Support for Concern Australia Workers

On a regular basis, Concern Australia will ensure that all workers are provided with training to understand and recommit to this Policy. Such training will also form part of any induction will be provided to concern Australia workers.

Concern Australia will provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm the procedures for workers to apply when taking action in relation to Children or Young People's welfare and safety. This will include a discussion of this Policy as a standing item for regular meetings at all levels.

We recognise that responding to Children or Young People who are at risk of or have experienced harm can be stressful. It is even more complex when the perpetrator of the harm is another worker. In these situations, we will provide opportunities for formal debriefing and/or counselling to Concern Australia workers as required.

Document History

Issue date	Version	Modify by	Approved by	Approved Date	Summary of Changes
20/01/2016	Draft	Beyanid Caicedo			Policy is created to introduce how Concern Australia complies with the requirements of "Child Safety and Protection Standards.
15/03/2016	Review draft	Andrew Johnstone			Review draft to ensure policy is compliant with DHHS Child Safety and Protection Standards. And is in line with Organisational practices
30/3/2016	Review draft	Vanessa Lister			
30/3/2016	Review draft	Andrea Greenwood			
30/5/2016	1.0		Georgette Wardan		

13. Signed Acceptance by incoming worker members

Please sign and date the following acceptance to confirm that you have received a copy of this Policy and agree to abide by the conditions contained within.

Acceptance

I, have read and understood the Concern Australia Child Safety and Protection Policy and agree to abide by its provisions.

I understand that any breach of its provisions will render me liable to appropriate disciplinary action which may result in dismissal, and improper use and disclosure of such information obtained directly or indirectly by virtue of my employment/engagement by or association with Concern Australia may also lead to prosecution.

.....

Signature of Employee

.....

Full Name of Employee

.....

Position

.....

Date