

CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY

Policy number	PCG-1	Version	3
Policy Accountability	CEO	First approved	29 th April 2019
Last revision	30 th May 2024	Next revision	May 2025
Accountable Manager	Implementation Manager		

1. INTRODUCTION

The Global EverGreening Alliance (GEA) is committed to promoting the safeguarding and protection of children at all times, and acting in the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to safeguarding and protection from abuse.

GEA has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at the Alliance is responsible for the safeguarding and protection of the children within our care and for reporting information about suspected child abuse.

The Alliance supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. The Alliance is committed to the cultural safety of indigenous children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If anyone believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse in Australia, call **000**. In other countries, telephone the relevant emergency phone number. Reports of incidents within GEA workplaces or programs in Australia are to be lodged per GEA's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures or Whistleblower Policy. These are available on the Alliance's website. Reports of incidents in GEA programs outside Australia are to be reported, first to the implementing partner organisation and also to the Alliance

2. SCOPE

Child safeguarding and protection is a shared responsibility, and this policy applies to members of the Board, employees, volunteers, ambassadors, contractors and implementing partner organisations (All Parties).

3. DEFINITION

Child Safeguarding - The actions taken by organisations to keep children safe (internally facing)

Child Protection - The actions taken by individuals, countries, governments, communities, families and civil society to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children (externally facing).

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. Maintain a safe and nurturing environment for children of all backgrounds.
2. Communicate the shared responsibility of All Parties to child safeguarding and protection.
3. Always uphold excellent and respectful behaviour, especially when in the presence of children.
4. Relay the consequences for personnel who engage in inappropriate behaviour and actions that endanger the welfare of children.

5. POLICY

1. Abuse and sexual exploitation constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment, engagement or inclusion with the Alliance. Where such an act is suspected, all relevant legal steps will be taken with regard to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.
2. GEA has an ACFID-compliant Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct that advances child safeguarding behaviours and applies to All Parties.
3. Exchange of money, gifts, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited.
4. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child will not be accepted as an excuse.
5. GEA will comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour. Alliance will not employ children under the prescribed legal age.
6. The Alliance will work with implementing partners to ensure that the opinions of children are considered in the development of child protection policies.
7. Alliance employees must not use any inappropriate language, communication, use of alcohol or drugs, photos, or images that undermine the Alliance's Workplace Code of Conduct and/or Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
8. Where an Alliance employee, volunteer or representative develops serious concerns regarding abuse or sexual exploitation, they must report such concerns to their supervisor, and also to local legal authorities where appropriate.
9. All Parties must not engage in any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, favouritism or exploitative sexual relations.
10. The Alliance commits to ensuring the privacy and safeguarding of children whenever personal information or images are used for promotion, fundraising or development education.
11. The Alliance will extend the requirements of this policy to its implementing partners through Programme Implementation Agreements.
12. The Alliance has appointed the People and Culture Manager as the Focal Person for child protection incident reporting.
13. The Alliance has a documented Child Safeguarding Incident Reporting Procedure and Complaints Handling Procedure that align with principles of privacy and promote safety and dignity.

14. This Policy will be reviewed annually to maintain its consistency and alignment with ACFID and funder requirements.

15. All staff and volunteers will be required to sign this policy during induction and undertake regular training.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Human Rights Policy

Child Safeguarding and Protection Procedures

Whistleblower Policy

Risk Management Policy

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

Privacy Policy

7. REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Revision no:	Summary description of revision(s) made	Section(s) changed:
29/04/2019	1	Development of Policy	All
6 January 2020	2	Update on use of communications materials and reporting channels	Introduction and Policy
May 2024	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the new logo, • new header information • Inclusion of contractors and implementing organisations in scope • addition of clause relating to child labour • policy items updated to comply with ACFID requirements • Addition of the requirement to consult with children in the 	Minor changes throughout Header Information Introduction, Scope, Policy and Related Documents,

		development of child protection policies	
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8. AUTHORISATION



Signature of Board Secretary

30th May 2024

Global EverGreening Alliance Ltd

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Policy number	PCG-1	Version	002
Policy Accountability	CEO	First approved	6 January 2020
Last revision	6 January 2020	Next revision	1 year after last revision
Accountable Manager		Implementation Manager	

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of the Global EverGreening Alliance (GEA) has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The Alliance is committed to:

1. Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
2. Ensuring that All Parties receive training in Child Safeguarding, are aware of relevant laws and have signed that they have read and are willing to comply with organisational policies and procedures, the GEA's Workplace Code of Conduct and the GEA's Child and Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
3. Ensuring that all adults within the GEA community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
4. Support staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking child protection responsibilities.
5. Ensuring that the 'Media and Communications Policy commits GEA to the use of images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education which ensures the privacy and safeguarding of children.
6. Ensuring that agreements with implementing partners include the requirement to read and agree to comply with the Alliance's 'Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedures'; and to ensure that appropriate, accessible procedures (eg friendly to children and community members who do not speak English or are illiterate) are in place for making the community (including children) aware of their right to complain and for reporting complaints, exploitation or abuse (refer to GEA's Complaints Handling Policy and Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Both are available at evergreening.org).

All managers must ensure that they:

1. Promote child safety at all times;
2. Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible;
3. Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
4. Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All Parties share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

1. Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and the Alliance's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
2. Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
3. Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
4. Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

2. DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child Safeguarding means what organisations do to keep children safe (internally facing) and encompasses any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child Protection is any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to protect children from harm by individuals, countries, governments, communities, families and civil society to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children (externally facing).

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child. It includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

Sexually abusive behaviour can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account, and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether any other related matters are known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

1. The child is in need of protection;
2. The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury";
3. The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

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 if:

1. A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
2. A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
3. Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
4. Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
5. Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

3. EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL

The Alliance undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all employees and volunteers which aims to:

1. Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
2. Identify the safest and most suitable people who share the Alliance's values and commitment to protect children; and
3. Prevent a person from working at the Alliance if they pose a risk to children.

Although the Alliance's staff and volunteers would rarely have contact with children in their work, the Alliance requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with the Alliance.

The Alliance requires all successful applicants to provide a national police check and Working with Children Check from their state of residence before they commence working at the Alliance and during their time with the Alliance at regular intervals.

The Alliance will undertake a minimum of two thorough verbal referee checks as per the approved internal procedure and will check preferred candidates against DFAT and other banned persons lists.

Once selected, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy and agree to comply with it as part of their employment/volunteer contract.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Alliance will ensure that child safety is part of its overall risk management approach and furthermore ensures the following:

1. Introductory, refresher and role-specific child safeguarding training is provided to the governing body, staff, volunteers, project visitors and partners.
2. The implementation of and compliance with the Alliance's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is periodically reported to the governing body.
3. Child safeguarding policies and practices are adapted to local contexts in collaboration with the Alliance's implementing partners.
4. The commitment to child safeguarding is promoted to both the Alliance's public and external stakeholders.

5. REPORTING

The Alliance's Complaints Procedure details how and to whom complaints can be lodged both in Australia and overseas.

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor and the Child Safeguarding and Protection Focal Person about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the CEO, the Alliance's Board and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Pursuant to the *Victorian Crimes Act 1958*, any person 18 years or older must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child, being a person under 16 years old, by another person of or over the age of 18 years.

6. INVESTIGATION

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, All Parties must cooperate fully with the investigation.

The People and Culture (P&C) Manager will act as the child protection incident reporting focal person. Whether or not the authorities decide to investigate, the P&C Manager will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the P&C Manager may decide to conduct such an investigation. All Parties must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The P&C Manger will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time, other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the P&C Manager shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

7. RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct, the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred, then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

8. PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will be treated with respect to the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone’s safety as per GEA’s Privacy Policy.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Human Rights Policy
- Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Media and Communications Policy
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- Staff Recruitment Policy

10. REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Revision no:	Summary description of revision(s) made	Section(s) changed:
18 December 2019	1	Strengthening the procedures for employing new personnel; cross-referencing to other policies and procedures	Recruitment, Reporting and Related Documents
May 2024	2	Procedures reviewed to confirm its alignment with policy and practice Addition of more related documents	No changes required

11. AUTHORISATION



Secretary of the Board
 30th May 2024
 Global EverGreening Alliance Ltd