



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FOR STT

APPLICABILITY	AOG World Relief Vietnam Team (Staff) Members & International Volunteers
VERSION	5
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PREAMBLE.....	3
GUIDING DOCUMENTS.....	3
OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING.....	3
PURPOSE.....	4
SCOPE.....	4
DEFINITIONS.....	5
REVIEWING THE POLICY.....	6
APPENDICES.....	7
APPENDIX #1: AOGWR VIETNAM CODE OF CONDUCT.....	7
APPENDIX #2: AOGWR VIETNAM INTERVIEW AND IMAGE CONSENT FORM.....	10

PREAMBLE

There is no higher standard of just human interaction than that required of us by God and laid out for us in the Bible. God in His nature embodies love and justice, and expects our relationships and interactions with others, including children, to be based on the same principles. In fulfilling our responsibilities, we protect each other's rights. This is captured today in what we call Human Rights.

Human rights are based on an understanding that all people are created equally and have equal value and equal dignity before God, affirmed not just in creation but also in redemption. All humans, and therefore all children, regardless of age, race, gender, social background, religion, disability and/or belief, hold human rights equally.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

AOG World Relief Vietnam (hereon after referred to as AOGWR Vietnam) support and uphold the rights of children as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as we believe that protecting the most vulnerable is evidence of our love for God and all His creation.

AOGWR Vietnam is also guided by both the Australian national and state frameworks, laws and policies around child protection and safeguarding¹ given it is a project office of ACCI as well as the laws of Vietnam in regard to such matters.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFEGUARDING

AOGWR Vietnam is committed to:

- Promote the care, protection and wellbeing of children in a way that recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment and their right to be protected from harm;
- Ensure AOGWR Vietnam projects respond appropriately to the needs of children in a way that fosters their health, development and dignity;
- Identify and mitigate both immediate and cumulative risks to children in the context of AOGWR Vietnam activities;
- Recognise the family as the primary means of providing for the nurture, care and protection of children; and
- Provide and promote a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders.

¹ For more information visit - aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation.

NOTE: Child Safeguarding vs Child Protection

This policy has been titled 'Child Safeguarding Policy' to reflect a move in the sector towards differentiating these terms.

Child Protection describes various actions taken by government, organisations and others to protect children from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. It includes national policies, laws, frameworks and programs related to issues involving children and their rights.

Child Safeguarding refers to the individual responsibility and duty of care of organisations to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing in the context of their program/organisation. This involves ensuring their staff, operations and programs do no harm to children or do not expose children to risk of harm or abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) is to outline the preventative and responsive measures AOGWR Vietnam has in place to safeguard children and ensure the care, protection and wellbeing of children is promoted. This policy aims to achieve this by:

- Demonstrating AOGWR Vietnam's commitment and approaches to child safeguarding;
- Outlining the expectations and responsibilities of AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders;
- Providing guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse; and
- Setting high standards around personal behaviour in a code of conduct that must be adhered to by all AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders.

SCOPE

Those who fall within the scope below are required to read, sign, and adhere to the AOGWR Vietnam Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (Appendix 1).

AOGWR Vietnam key stakeholders, specifically:

- All AOGWR Vietnam Team (Staff) Members.
- All AOGWR Vietnam Advisory Board Members.
- All AOGWR Vietnam International Volunteers.

AOGWR Vietnam recognises that other stakeholders including partner governments and agencies, multilateral organisations, downstream partners including event-staff, contractors, and consultants, as well as local volunteers and/or visitors cannot be screened according to the same recruitment and screening processes as the above listed key stakeholders due to national governance structures, frameworks, and associated requirements. We also recognise that they must also abide by their own relevant policies, international declarations, conventions, agreements, and domestic legal frameworks that relate to child safeguarding/protection. However, to uphold high standards of risk mitigation and management processes, AOGWR Vietnam expects these groups to act in accordance with the principles and reporting requirements outlined in this policy.

For this policy, AOGWR Vietnam key stakeholder expectations and responsibilities have been divided into three categories based on level of interactions with children. See the below:

LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISKS
<p>AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders who do not work directly with children.</p> <p><i>(For example, leadership training, vocational training or developing resources)</i></p>	<p>AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders who work directly or have direct contact with children.</p> <p><i>(For example, child-focused programs like tutoring or early education, or programs that involve children like community strengthening)</i></p>	<p>AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders who work directly with children in high-risk programs.</p> <p><i>(For example, child protection programs, residential care, trafficking interventions or other programs involving at-risk children)</i></p>

NOTE: Stakeholder Categories

- To this policy, donors and beneficiaries are not defined as stakeholders.

DEFINITIONS

Child and Young Person - A child or young person is regarded to be any person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse – Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual or in the form of neglect. Intervention is required where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer neglect or abuse which is detrimental to the child’s wellbeing.

- **Physical abuse** is commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from practices such as punching, beating, shaking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child.
- **Sexual abuse** occurs when an adult or older child, uses their power or authority over the child or takes advantage of the child’s trust to involve them in sexual activity. This sexual activity does not just mean sexual intercourse; it means any sexual activity including flashing, fondling, masturbating and oral sex.
- **Emotional abuse** tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at the child/young person whereby their self-esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time.
- **Neglect** is characterised by the failure to provide for the child/young person’s basic needs. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for the child/young person.”

Abuse happens to both male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and political persuasion. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves. In some cases, professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust also abuse children.

Child Protection – Child Protection is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

Child Safeguarding – Safeguarding is a relatively new term which is broader than 'child protection' as it also includes prevention. Safeguarding has been defined as:

- All agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised; and

- Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.²

REVIEWING THE POLICY

AOGWR Vietnam's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct will be reviewed every three (3) years.

The AOGWR Vietnam Management Team and/or Advisory Board will manage the review and stakeholders will be consulted during this process.

² *Safeguarding Children (2005), The 2nd Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children. A broader definition can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children.*

APPENDIX #1: AOGWR VIETNAM CODE OF CONDUCT

NOTE: This Code has been divided into two parts to acknowledge the separation of boundaries that we have for children in our personal lives (your children and those of your family and friends) and those in our work and ministry lives.

- Part One outlines commitments AOGWR Vietnam stakeholders must abide by at all times.
- Part Two outline commitments within work and ministry contexts.

In accordance with AOGWR Vietnam’s Child Safeguarding Policy, all stakeholders (as defined in the section on ‘SCOPE’) are required to read, sign and adhere to the following Code of Conduct.

I, (insert name) _____, as an AOGWR Vietnam team (staff) member/volunteer/short-term team member/ partner/board member/other agree that while associated with AOGWR Vietnam:

PART ONE IN BOTH MY WORK/MINISTRY AND PERSONAL LIFE

I WILL:

1. Treat children with dignity and respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. Listen to children, take their concerns seriously, and allow them to have a say in the decisions that affect them.
3. Provide children with a safe and protective environment.
4. Ensure that, whether residing in or visiting a country, I will always abide by Australian (if an Australian citizen or resident)) and local laws in regards to child protection and child labour at all times.
5. Ensure I am not in a position where there is a risk of an allegation being made.
6. Immediately disclose to AOGWR Vietnam management all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association with AOGWR Vietnam that relates to child exploitation and abuse (see the **AOGWR Vietnam Child Safeguarding Policy** for details).

I WILL NOT:

1. Engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts.
 2. Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
 3. Physically assault or abuse children.
 4. Use language or behaviour towards children that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
 5. Conduct or be part of harmful traditional practices, spiritual or ritualistic abuse.
 6. Hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, which places them at significant risk of injury or which does not adhere to child labour laws.
 7. Use any form of media and technology (including but not limited to computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media) to exploit or harass children.
 8. View or access child pornography through any source or medium.
 9. Participate in orphanage tourism/volunteerism including visiting or volunteering in a residential care centre where I am not a key stakeholder. I will also not be involved in facilitating orphanage tourism through sending, organising or receiving teams (of non-stakeholders) for the purpose of volunteering or visiting a residential care centre.
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PART TWO

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, WITHIN MY WORK/MINISTRY LIFE

I WILL:

1. Be committed to creating a culture of openness and mutual accountability in my work place/ministry, to enable all child safeguarding issues or concerns to be raised and discussed and where abusive behaviour is challenged.
2. Ensure that the risks of working alone are minimised by using the 'two-adult rule'. Whenever possible, I will ensure that another adult is present or within reach when I am working with children with whom I am in a position of trust or authority. If two staff members are not available, I will stay in public view or a trusted member of the family/community may accompany me and the child/ren.
3. Ensure that in any children's programmes, children will have privacy for all their personal needs such as toileting, changing, bathing and dressing.
4. I will comply with the **AOGWR Vietnam Communications Policy**, which states that to photograph or video a child I must obtain informed consent from the child and his/her parents/guardians (see **AOGWR Vietnam Communications Policy** for details).
5. Immediately report any concerns or allegations I have of child abuse in accordance with the **AOGWR Vietnam Child Safeguarding Policy**.

I WILL NOT:

1. Touch (including holding, hugging and kissing) a child in a way that is unnecessary or inappropriate to the culture or circumstance.
2. Do things of a personal nature for a child that they could do for themselves (such as assistance with toileting, bathing or changing clothes). Where a child cannot do such things for themselves, I will ensure I follow the “two adult rule”.
3. Hit, smack or otherwise physically assault, punish or abuse children, even where this may be culturally acceptable.
4. Be intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs prior to, or whilst, engaging with any child.
5. Spend time with a child alone, take a child to my own home or visit a child where I may be alone with that child. In the case where I have a friendship with the parents, which is not based on a position of trust, authority or dependency, and the parents give permission for me to care for the child, I may do so whilst maintaining the other commitments of this code.
6. Sleep in the same bed as a child.
7. Sleep in the same room as a child. If a child is sick, in hospital, in residential care or, for another reason, the child cannot sleep in a room alone and I am unable to organise a family member to stay with the child, I will ensure that I follow the “two-adult rule” and that neither adult sleeps in the same bed as the child.
8. Show favouritism to children or give children preferential treatment based on (but not limited to) their age, race, gender, religion or place in local society.
9. Exchange personal contact details with children.
10. Utilise workers/volunteers who pose a known risk to children’s safety.
11. Put photos, videos or other identifying information of a child on social media without informed consent from the child and his/her parents/guardians.

I understand that it is my responsibility to keep up to date with the latest AOGWR Vietnam child safeguarding information. It is also my responsibility to ensure that I adhere to the above Code of Conduct.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

INDIVIDUAL LOG OF CONCERNS

CODE NUMBER	CONCERN RAISED	AGREED ACTION

APPENDIX #2:
AOGWR VIETNAM INTERVIEW AND IMAGE
CONSENT FORM

Please click the below link to access our **AOGWR Vietnam Interview and Image Consent Form** to be completed by team members as needed:

<https://aogwr.org/photo>