



Save the Children
Fiji

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Definitions

Child: Save the Children Fiji uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) definition of a child, which is any person under the age of 18, regardless of whether a nation's laws recognize adulthood earlier.

Child Protection: The term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being harmed, abused, exploited or neglected.

Child Safeguarding: Within Save the Children, the term "Child Safeguarding" refers to the set of policies, procedures and practices that we employ to ensure SCF itself is a child safe organisation. This Child Protection Policy is the declaration signed onto by all staff and associates, working alongside the Child Safeguarding Policy to ensure these principles are implemented and followed.

Staff: This includes all employees.

Associates: This includes all consultants, board members, researchers, volunteers, partner organizations, interns and students.

Child Abuse: Child abuse includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, bullying, child labour, domestic violence and exploitation including commercial sexual exploitation. Both boys and girls can be the victims of child abuse. Child abuse can be inflicted on a child by men or women, or by young people themselves. In some cases, professionals and other adults working with children in positions of trust abuse children.

Working with Children: Working in a position that involves regular contact with children, either as part of the person's position description or due to the context of the work that brings the person into regular contact with children.

Screening: This term includes criminal record checks (often called "police checks" or "Police Clearance Reports") which are conducted to determine if a person has any known criminal history. Additional screening measures may include: "working with children" checks, identity checks, verbal referee checks and targeted, behavioural-based interview questions.

2. Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's largest independent child rights development organisation, making a difference to children's lives in more than 100 countries. From emergency relief to long-term development, Save the Children works to realize every child's right to health, education and protection – in Fiji and abroad. Our purpose and vision is to inspire breakthroughs in the way children are treated, and to achieve immediate and lasting changes in their lives by working to create a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

3. Our Commitment to Protect Children

Save the Children Fiji (SCF) is committed to protecting children, regardless of gender, race, country of origin or religious belief. The organization's work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children should be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation, including sexual abuse. In line with Save the Children's commitment to end all corporal punishment of children, Save the Children Fiji will provide awareness-raising and training for all staff and associates regarding positive parenting and behaviour management strategies. We will assist staff and associates to refrain from using any form of physical punishment in their own lives.

4. Purpose of the Child Protection Policy

Child abuse is a serious violation of children's rights. Save the Children Fiji will minimize the risk of child abuse, and prevent harm to children, occurring in its programs and activities through the implementation of this Policy and the Child Safeguarding Policy. The Child Protection Policy provides a practical guide to prevent child abuse occurring and incorporate risk management strategies.

The reporting process in the Child Protection Policy outlines obligations and responsibilities for reporting and managing any concerns about child abuse. It also protects staff and associates from unfair processes should any allegations be made about them.

Save the Children Fiji's recruitment process includes rigorous screening of staff and associates to minimize the chance of a person who poses a risk to children being employed by the organisation. These strategies will assist everyone to understand their child protection responsibilities, maintain a positive work environment for staff and also create safe environments where children are protected and enabled to survive and thrive.

5. Guiding Principles

Save the Children Fiji's commitment to child protection is based on the following principles:

- Promoting and protecting the best interests of children at all times
- Zero tolerance of child abuse – mandatory reporting of confirmed or suspected child abuse
- Child protection is a shared responsibility between the organisation, its partners and the communities in which it works, and
- The views of children and young people will be used to inform child protection policy and program development.

6. Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to the following:

- Staff
- Board Members
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Consultants
- Partner organizations of Save the Children Fiji
- Government department and agency staff in regular contact with SCF programs, and
- People visiting programs, including journalists and donors.

Save the Children Fiji staff, whether national, international, full time, part time or engaged on short-term contracts, e.g. consultants, researchers etc., commit to implement and monitor the implementation of the Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Policies. These duties are reflected in all job descriptions. Volunteers, trustees and SCF board members, Save the Children members and other representatives agree to do likewise.

Staff and associates of partner agencies and any other individuals, groups or organizations who have a formal/contractual relationship with SCF, involving any contact with children, will either sign onto the SCF Child Protection Policy or produce a signed copy of their own safeguarding or child protection policy. Acceptance by SCF of partner or associate organisation policies must be formally agreed and documented, to reflect that a comprehensive review of the principles and enforcement mechanisms has been completed and accepted as a sufficient substitute for SCF policies.

Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit Save the Children programs or offices in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting our programs or offices. During such times they are considered SCF associates.

By signing the Child Protection Policy Declaration, all of the above agree to act in accordance with this Policy in both their professional and their personal lives.

7. Child Protection Policy Implementation Strategy

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) and Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) will be implemented through:

- Child protection capacity building – the Child Protection Specialist will enhance awareness of child protection issues among staff and associates through policy promotion, collaboration, advocacy and ongoing education and training.
- Child Protection Policy Declaration – outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour - for people to whom the declaration applies – in relation to children with whom we work. A breach of the declaration may result in termination of employment.
- Risk management – effective child abuse prevention strategies will be incorporated in all Save the Children Fiji program designs, activities and emergency responses.
- Compliance – staff and associates are required to sign a written declaration agreeing to comply with the Child Protection Policy.
- Mandatory reporting of alleged or suspected cases of child abuse – reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and as quickly as possible, and will meet country specific legislative and regulatory requirements. Any employee who intentionally makes a false or malicious allegation will face disciplinary action.
- Response - we will ensure that action is taken to support, safeguard and protect children where concerns arise regarding their possible abuse and exploitation.
- Child Protection Focal Points (CPFP) – CPFPs have been appointed and are supported in the SCF offices to promote child protection and respond to any reports of child abuse.
- Recruitment and staff management practices – prospective and current staff will be screened and monitored to ensure the organization does not employ or retain people who pose a risk to children. Criminal record checks (police checks) will be conducted – where available – particularly for positions working directly with children. Additional screening measures will include “working with children” checks, identity checks, verbal referee checks and interview questions.
- Child Protection Guidelines – Detailed guidelines will be available to assist staff to implement and meet specific requirements of the Child Protection Policy.
- Review – The Policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed at least every three years.
- Child Safeguarding Trustee on the SCF Board – provides direct and regular oversight of the CPP and CSP, receives and responds to reports from the CPFP/SCF Management, assists in CP/CS Policy review, and monitors policy implementation.

8. Declarations to be Signed by Staff and Associates

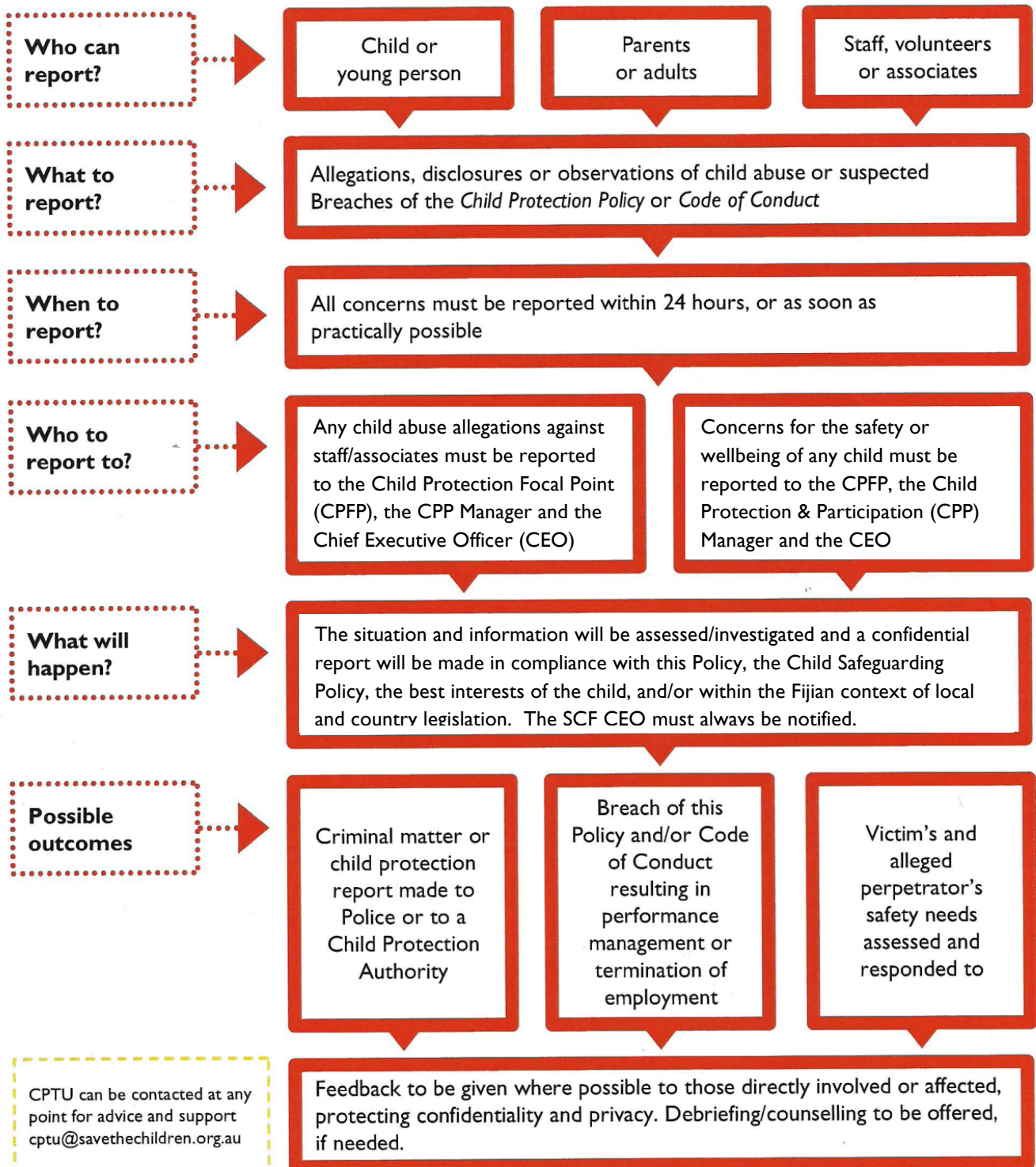
All staff must sign a Declaration in the form set out in Section 10 prior to commencing employment, or at the commencement of this Policy.

All Associates must sign a Declaration in the form set out in Section 11 prior to commencing their role as an Associate, or at the commencement of this Policy.

Declarations signed by Staff and Associates must be returned to the SCF Human Resource Officer, for filing on personnel and associate records.

REPORTING PROCESS FLOWCHART

Child Protection Reporting Process



Save the Children, Child Protection Policy

The CPTU is the Child Protection Technical Unit within Save the Children Australia; this is a free service provided within the pacific region on a needs basis

9. Child Protection Policy Declaration

Children who come into contact with Save the Children and its International Programs are safeguarded to the maximum extent from child abuse and sexual exploitation. Everyone associated with Save the Children International must be fully aware of the problem and risks of child abuse and sexual exploitation

All Staff and Associates of Save the Children Fiji must demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour towards children both in their private and professional lives. They must not abuse the position of trust that comes with being a part of the Save the Children family. They must do all that they can to prevent, report and respond appropriately to such issues.

The Child Protection Policy includes mandatory requirements that apply to everyone in all aspects of Save the Children Fiji's work whether in advocacy and campaigns, development programs or humanitarian and emergency responses.

I, (insert name) agree that in the course of my association with Save the Children Fiji,

I will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, birth or other status
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers
- Encourage children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers to speak up about issues that affect them, responding with understanding and without judgement
- Refrain from using corporal punishment on children
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with Save the Children Fiji's reporting process
- Comply with local, national and international child protection laws
- Ensure that, whenever possible, another adult is present when I am working with children, or in the proximity of children
- Advise my supervisor/manager of my involvement in any situation where my actions could be misinterpreted
- Advise my supervisor/manager if I am involved in any situation which would be likely to bring the organisation into disrepute, and
- Advise my supervisor/manager if I am investigated for any crime or charged with any criminal offence.

And I will not:

- Use inappropriate language – whether of an offensive, discriminatory, demeaning, abusive or sexual nature – when speaking with or whilst in the presence of a child or young person
- Engage in behaviour to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child or young person, or otherwise emotionally abuse a child or young person
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse a child or young person
- Marry a person under the age of 18
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years regardless of the age of majority/consent or custom locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence
- Act in a sexually provocative manner or engage children in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way
- Condone or participate in, behaviour with children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse

- Discriminate against, show unfair differential treatment or favour to particular children to the exclusion of others
- Spend time outside work requirements with any child or young person connected with Save the Children Fiji's programs
- Hire children for domestic or any other labour which is inappropriate for their age or development, interferes with their education or play, or places them at risk of injury
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves such as toileting them or changing their clothes
- Sleep in close proximity to any children unless it is absolutely necessary, in which case I will keep my supervisor/manager informed and ensure another adult is present, where possible (noting that this does not apply to my own children)
- Access, distribute or create sexually abusive images of children, and
- Use computers, mobile phones, video or digital cameras or any other technology for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.

Use of children's images

Before photographing or filming a child for work related purposes, **I will:**

- Assess and comply with local traditions or restrictions on reproducing personal images
- At a minimum, obtain and document verbal consent from children and/or their parent or guardian and explain how the photograph or film will be used. Written consent should be obtained, where possible
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be perceived as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the situations and the facts
- Ensure the identities of children and young people in photographic and electronic images are not disclosed
- Ensure these files are stored securely and access is limited on a needs basis to relevant staff only.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. Staff, SCF Board Members, Volunteers, partners and all other associates should at all times avoid actions or conduct which may allow behaviour to be misrepresented, constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

10. Save the Children Fiji Staff – Signed Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood Save the Children Fiji's:

- Child Protection Policy, and
- Child Safeguarding Policy.

I agree to comply with the Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Policies.

I understand that a breach of these Policies may provide grounds for my employment with SCF to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of these Policies could result in criminal prosecution.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person engaged by Save the Children Fiji, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that are abusive or exploitative of children or young people, or could be construed as such.

I authorize Save the Children Fiji to undertake any necessary inquiries, including criminal record checks and reference checks, as part of my appointment or recruitment process.

I confirm my willingness to participate in SCF training sessions on child protection.

..... Job title
Signature

..... Date
Name in block letters

11. Save the Children Fiji Associates – Signed Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood Save the Children Fiji's:

- Child Protection Policy, and
- Child Safeguarding Policy.

I agree to comply with the Child Protection and Child Safeguarding Policies.

I understand that a breach of these Policies may provide grounds for my appointment or association with the organisation to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of these Policies could result in criminal prosecution.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person associated with Save the Children Fiji, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that are abusive or exploitative of children or young people, or could be construed as such.

I authorize Save the Children Fiji to undertake any necessary inquiries, including criminal record checks and reference checks, as a part of my appointment by or association with the organisation.

I confirm my willingness to participate in Save the Children Fiji training sessions on child protection.

..... Job title
Signature

..... Date
Name in block letters