

ABV's Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) is committed to the safety and protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. Whilst ABV does not run programs designed for or work directly with children, we recognise that children are part of the community fabric in the countries where we work and therefore ABV has a strong commitment to their safety, wellbeing and protection. ABV recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation than others. Children living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, children from minority groups, children living in emergency or conflict situations and children on the move are often at higher risk of abuse.

ABV supports the rights of children and will act to ensure a child safe environment is maintained. ABV has adopted and applied best practice child protection policy and procedures in accordance with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade child protection standards, ACFID Code of Conduct and ACNC External Conduct Standard 4 – Protection of Vulnerable Individuals. Australian child protection legislation, which is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and administered through state and territory statutory frameworks, underpins ABV's commitment to upholding children's safety, rights and best interests.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Child Protection Policy is to:

- a. Establish a framework for safeguarding children across ABV programs.
- b. Provide clear guidelines for reporting allegations of child exploitation, abuse and harm.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with ABV's Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all but not limited to:

- a. All ABV personnel, including employees, directors, volunteers, interns, contractors, consultants, and representatives of ABV ('ABV Personnel').
- b. Partner organisations to the extent that safeguarding obligations have been agreed through contracts, funding agreements, partnership agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, Letters of Agreement or other documented arrangements with ABV. Where appropriate, these obligations may also extend to a partner's employees, volunteers, contractors and representatives involved in ABV-supported activities.

4. Definitions

Child or Children: a person under the age of 18.

Child Abuse: includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, and online or digital abuse. It also includes a child or children witnessing such abuse against another child or adult.

Child Exploitation: Refers to one or more of the following actions:

- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child
- possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material
- committing an act of grooming, including online grooming
- using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, trafficking, forced labour, or any other personal or financial advantage.

Harm: refers to any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

Victim-survivor: child victim-survivor is a term used to describe a person under the age of 18 who is, or has been, abused, exploited or harmed. 'Victim-survivor' acknowledges both the harm suffered (victim) and the resilience or agency of the child in coping with the aftermath (survivor). This term emphasises a supportive, rights-based approach to addressing their needs and upholding their dignity throughout the reporting and response process.

Retaliation: Any negative action taken against an individual who reports a violation of this policy or participates in an investigation, including discrimination or harassment.

5. Policy

5.1 POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a. **Programs are not intended for children:** ABV does not design, deliver, support or facilitate programs, services or activities for children. Children must not participate in, attend or be present at ABV activities or programs, whether in person or online. All ABV programs, services and activities are intended for adult participants and organisational beneficiaries.
- b. **Zero tolerance:** ABV has zero-tolerance towards any form of child exploitation, abuse and harm and zero tolerance towards inaction of reporting of incidents of child exploitation, abuse and harm.
- c. **Best interests of the child:** All actions and decisions must prioritise children's rights, safety and wellbeing and are underpinned by a "do no harm" approach. Responses to incidences must be trauma informed, child-centred and enable access to support services.
- d. **Promote inclusion and equity and recognise diversity** ABV must be welcoming and inclusive of all children regardless of their circumstances, abilities, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, displacement, and social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Efforts must address barriers to participation, protection, reporting and support such as language, safety, discrimination and accessibility.
- e. **Prioritise prevention:** ABV must be proactive in promoting the safety of children and minimising risks to children. Actions to protect children must be embedded in policies, programs, recruitment, staff training and daily operations to minimise risks and protect children, both in physical and online spaces.
- f. **Adopt an empowering and participatory approach:** ABV must empower children to understand their rights, express concerns, and participate in decisions affecting them in ways that are age-appropriate, voluntary and safe.
- g. **Reporting incidents is mandatory:** ABV requires mandatory and immediate reporting of child protection concerns related to ABV business. Reporting and response mechanisms must be clear, accessible and confidential. Reporting mechanisms must ensure that those who raise concerns are protected and that concerns are addressed effectively and in a timely and appropriate manner.
- h. **Embed safeguarding into organisational culture and leadership** ABV must embed child protection in governance, leadership and institutional culture. A strong safeguarding culture requires clear accountability, leadership commitment, investment of resources and continuous review and improvement of policies and practices.
- i. **Compliance:** Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for all ABV Personnel.

5.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- a. **Board of Directors:** The Board ensures strong governance of Child Protection by embedding safeguarding in decision-making, resourcing the framework and monitoring reports.
- b. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** The CEO provides strategic leadership for Child Protection, appoints and oversees and manages serious concerns, and ensures organisation-wide risk management.
- c. **Compliance Officer:** The Compliance Officer leads the implementation of Child Protection policies by ensuring that safeguarding requirements are integrated into operational processes, monitoring compliance, coordinating policy updates, and supporting ABV Personnel to understand and meet their obligations. The role also includes coordinating with the CEO incident reporting.
- d. **Human Resources (HR):** HR integrates safeguarding into recruitment and performance systems, maintains compliance and vetting records, and ensures all personnel complete required Child Protection training and checks.
- e. **Line Managers and Volunteer Managers:** Line Managers and Volunteer Managers embed safeguarding into their operational areas and promote a culture of accountability and child safety across teams.

5.3 CODE OF CONDUCT

ABV has developed a Child Protection Code of Conduct to make clear the standards of behaviour and practice required of all ABV Personnel. All ABV Personnel are required to read and sign the ABV Child Protection Code of Conduct ([Attachment B](#))

5.4 WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- a. ABV applies a risk-based and proportionate approach to child safeguarding requirements for Partner organisations. Safeguarding obligations will be determined having regard to:
 - i. the nature of the partnership;
 - ii. the partner's role in program delivery;
 - iii. whether the partner is implementing activities on behalf of ABV;
 - iv. the potential for contact with children through program activities; and
 - v. any contractual, donor, regulatory or legal requirements.
- b. ABV will:
 - i. undertake due diligence proportionate to the safeguarding risks associated with the partnership;
 - ii. if appropriate support partners to develop their own Child Protection policies and procedures;
 - iii. permit partners with limited safeguarding capacity to adopt ABV's Child Protection policies if appropriate;
 - iv. work collaboratively to include safeguarding clauses, proportionate to the safeguarding risks of the relationship, in relevant contracts, subcontracts, grant agreements, partnership agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Agreement.
- c. Where a Partner is delivering activities on behalf of ABV, or where ABV determines that a partnership presents elevated safeguarding risks, ABV will require the Partner to:
 - i. adopt ABV's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct; or
 - ii. maintain equivalent safeguarding policies, procedures and practices that meet applicable DFAT requirements.

5.5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.5.1 Risk Register & Board Oversight

Child Protection will be a standard inclusion on ABV's Strategic Risk Register and Operational Risk Register that will be monitored, reviewed and reported to the Board on a regular basis. The Executive will provide the Board with regular reports on child protection incidents, concerns, investigations.

5.5.2 Risk Assessments

ABV will undertake documented child protection risk assessments for all new programs and activities before personnel are deployed and/or activities commence. Risk assessments will identify relevant child protection risks and mitigation measures appropriate to the activity and operating context. Risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually and updated as required where there are significant changes to the activity, location, operating environment or identified risks. The Risk Officer will nominate appropriate program personnel to undertake risk assessments.

5.5.3 Reporting Mechanisms

Robust and confidential reporting mechanisms as outlined in this policy will be implemented and reviewed/evaluated on a regular basis by the Compliance Officer.

5.6 USE OF CHILDREN'S IMAGES

As ABV is not a child-focused organisation, ABV Personnel must avoid the inclusion of children in photographs, videos or other visual material wherever possible when engaged with ABV programs. Children may only be included where their presence is incidental, unavoidable and demonstrably appropriate, and where such inclusion clearly supports ABV's purpose and activities.

Where children are included, ABV will always ensure they are portrayed in a respectful, appropriate and consensual manner, consistent with child safe principles and privacy obligations.

Our guidelines on the use of children's images, are:

- a. A child and their family must always be asked for consent when using their images. When asking for consent to use the image, details should be given as to how and where this image will be used.
- b. A child should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- c. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- d. There should be no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images with their location.
- e. Children should not be portrayed in isolation; instead, they should be portrayed as part of their community.
- f. Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- g. Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts and not be altered in any significant way (unless the alteration is to blur faces or identifying features at the request of the child or their family).
- h. When sending images electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.
- i. All hired photographers to ABV programs or activities will be screened for their suitability, including police checks where appropriate.

5.7 RECRUITMENT/SCREENING AND TRAINING

5.7.1 Employment/Engagement of ABV Staff

ABV is committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices. These practices are detailed in ABV's HR manual. Requirements include:

- a. Informing applicants of screening requirements during recruitment, including mandatory criminal history checks and Working with Children Checks applicable to the relevant state, territory, or country requirements.
- b. Requiring all staff to provide proof of identity (e.g., birth certificate, passport, driver's licence) and relevant qualifications. Original documents must be sighted (either in person or via an approved virtual verification process).
- c. Conducting interviews for all positions, ideally face-to-face, noting that telephone or virtual interviews may be necessary in international contexts.
- d. Conducting personal and employment reference checks.
- e. Applying a probationary period to all positions, dependent on the length of the contract.

5.7.2 Engagement of Skilled Business Professionals (SBPs) and Corporate Volunteers

ABV is committed to child-safe recruitment, selection and screening of SBPs and Corporate Volunteers. Requirements include:

- a. Conducting interviews for all positions, either by telephone or virtually. Interviews will include child safety specific questions addressing a candidate's ability to work safely with vulnerable people.
- b. Requiring all SBPs and Corporate Volunteers to read and sign Acknowledgement of ABV's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct ([Attachment B](#)) during onboarding and pre-departure training.
- c. Recruiting in accordance with ABV's registration process, which include mandatory reference checks, criminal history checks and Working with Children Checks applicable to the relevant state, territory, or country requirements.

5.7.3 Ongoing Monitoring

Ongoing Child-safe practices include:

- a. All ABV Personnel must read and sign Acknowledgement of ABV's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct ([Attachment B](#)).
- b. All ABV Personnel must maintain a police check and, a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) applicable to the relevant state, territory, or country requirements on file.
- c. ABV reserves the right to refuse employment to, or terminate the employment of, any person who may pose a risk to children.

5.7.4 Training

ABV is committed to ensuring all ABV Personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to uphold ABV's child protection standards.

- a. Training on ABV's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy is mandatory during induction of all ABV Personnel and refresher/updated training is to be conducted on a regular basis (annually at a minimum).
- b. Training may be delivered in person or online.
- c. The Training & Development Officer and Compliance Officer will monitor completion of induction training and refresher training of all ABV Personnel.

5.8 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

5.8.1 Emergency: If a victim-survivor is in immediate danger, Emergency Services should be called:

- a. Australia: 000 (Police & Ambulance)
- b. Papua New Guinea: 000 (Police & Ambulance)

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- c. Solomon Islands: 988 (Fire & Emergency Services), 999 (Police)
 - d. Vanuatu: 111, 22222 (Police) or 22100 (Ambulance)
 - e. Tonga: 911, 922 (Police), 999 (Fire), or 933 (Ambulance)
 - f. Samoa: 911 (Police & Ambulance)
 - g. Fiji: 911 (Police & Ambulance)
 - h. Naoero: 110 (Police) 111 (Ambulance)

5.8.1 Who can report: All ABV Personnel are mandatory reporters, and community members, and participants of ABV programs and activities are encouraged to report.

5.8.2 What to report: Any disclosure, concern or allegation regarding the exploitation, abuse or harm of a child, including actual, suspected or risks of exploitation, abuse or harm. Any breach of ABV's Child Protection Policy or Code of Conduct. When in doubt, report.

5.8.3 When to report: Reports must be done immediately (within 24 hours) to the CEO and Compliance Officer (the person making the report should ensure that they receive an acknowledgement of receipt from the Compliance Officer and/or CEO). Reports may also be reported in accordance with ABV's Reporting Wrongful Disclosures or Complaints Policies or through the following channels:

- a. Directly to the reporter's main contact within ABV.
- b. Directly to the reporter's Line Manager.
- c. Directly to ABV's management team.
- d. Directly to ABV Program Manager (if overseas).
- e. Directly to an ABV Board member in writing (a request can be made to ABV's CEO for the appropriate contact details).

If a person receives a report in accordance with (a-e) above, they must ensure that the CEO and Compliance Officer are informed immediately (if not already). If it is considered to be a conflict of interest to notify the CEO and Compliance Officer, the Chair of the Board should be notified immediately.

5.8.4 How to report: Reports may be made verbally or by submitting a Child Protection Incident Notification Form [Attachment A](#) and can be directed to welfare@abv.org.au.

5.8.5 Review: Upon receipt of the incident report, the CEO and Compliance Officer will review according to the procedures in [Attachment C](#) and Safeguarding Response Flowchart in [Attachment D](#). The Board should also be notified as soon as possible.

5.8.6 External Reporting: CEO and Compliance Officer will inform necessary parties due to legal, contracted, agreement or policy requirements which may include DFAT, Partner organisations, relevant agencies or funders.

5.8.7 DFAT Funded Programs: DFAT funded project incidents must be reported to DFAT immediately (within 24 hours). Reports can be made by sending an email to childprotection@dfat.gov.au or by calling +61 2 6178 5100.

5.9 BREACH OF POLICY/RETALIATION

5.9.1 Violations of this policy will be met with disciplinary measures appropriate to the severity of the breach, which may include termination of employment, assignment or contractual relationships.

5.9.2 ABV prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report violations or participate in investigations. Retaliatory actions will be addressed with appropriate disciplinary measures.

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- 5.9.3** Disciplinary actions will be based on the severity of the policy breach and may range from warnings to termination of employment or contract.
- 5.9.4** Accused individuals will have the opportunity to respond to allegations and participate in the investigation process in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

5.10 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.10.1** Information regarding allegations and investigations will be kept confidential and shared only with those directly involved in the resolution process.
- 5.10.2** Documentation related to reports, investigations, and actions taken will be securely maintained and stored.

5.11 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will undergo regular monitoring and evaluation (every three years at a minimum) in the interest of continual improvement. The Compliance Officer will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation.

6. Related Documents

ABV Code of Conduct
ABV Wrongful Disclosures Policy
ABV Complaints Policy
ABV PSEAH Policy
ABV Privacy Policy

7. Document Information

Policy Owner:	CEO
Policy Authority:	Board
Policy Implementer:	Policy and Compliance Coordinator
Original approval:	14 August 2026
Last Reviewed:	14 August 2026
Last Policy Change:	14 August 2026
Next review date:	14 August 2029

Attachment A – Child Incident Report

ABV – Child Protection Reporting Form

Confidential – Privacy & Use Notification

This reporting form may be used by ABV personnel (staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants) as well as other stakeholders, including community members, partner organisations, program participants, or any individual wishing to report a child-safeguarding concern. Please complete this form with as much detail as possible. However, partially completed forms will still be accepted and reviewed, and should be submitted even where full information is not available at the time.

The form is intended solely for reporting child protection concerns and must be submitted directly to the ABV CEO and Compliance Officer at welfare@abv.org.au. All information shared through this form will be handled confidentially and strictly on a need-to-know basis.

ABV collects and uses your personal information to assist in maintaining safe environments for children during the delivery of its business activities. ABV may contact you regarding the information you have provided. ABV may also disclose relevant information to regulators and/or law enforcement agencies so that any threat to a child's safety, welfare, or wellbeing can be appropriately investigated.

Section	Details
1. Reporter Details	
Name or code (if anonymous):	
Role/relationship to ABV:	
Contact details (email/phone):	
Date and time of reporting:	
2. Incident Details	
Date and time of incident:	
Location (country, city/town, program site):	
Description of incident:	Please indicate most appropriate description of alleged incident: Sexual Abuse\Sexual Misconduct, Physical Abuse, Psychological Abuse, Neglect
Have any injuries been observed or reported?	
Are there any immediate safety concerns?	
Describe actions already taken (if any)	
Is the victim still in danger of abuse or neglect?	

Are local police or other local authority aware of the incident/allegation?	
What other authorities have been informed?	
3. Victim-Survivor Details	
Name or code:	
Age of child at time of incident:	
Gender:	
Relationship to ABV:	
Consent to report (Yes/No/Unknown):	
Support provided/requested:	
4. Alleged Perpetrator Details	
Name:	
Age or age range:	
Gender:	
Contact Details:	
Relationship to ABV:	
5. Witness Details (if applicable)	
Name(s) or codes:	
Contact (if appropriate):	
Witness account:	
Additional Context	
6. Relevant contextual information:	
Ongoing risks to others:	
Any other pertinent details	
7. Declaration	
Reporter name:	
Signature (electronic or handwritten, where available; typed name accepted where a signature is not possible)	

Date:	
Submission Instruction: Submit to CEO and Compliance Officer to welfare@abv.org.au . For urgent safety issues, contact local emergency services immediately.	

Attachment B – ABV Child Protection Policy & Code of Conduct

ABV CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received and read ABV's Child Protection Policy. I agree to be bound by the terms of the policy and agree that in the course of my association with ABV I will:

- understand that ABV is not a child-focused organisation and does not design, deliver, support or facilitate programs, services or activities for children.
- not engage directly with children (online or in person) as part of ABV activities, when representing ABV on programs, or whilst undertaking assignment-related and/or work-related travel. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Participating in, leading, supervising or facilitating youth-focused activities, programs, workshops, camps, mentoring sessions or events.
 - Conducting classroom visits, presentations, educational activities or training sessions involving children.
 - Holding one-on-one meetings, interviews, mentoring conversations or informal discussions with children.
 - Taking photographs, videos or recordings of children, except where expressly authorised and required under ABV procedures.
 - Visiting schools, childcare centres, youth clubs, sporting activities or community programs where interaction with children forms part of the activity.
 - Participating in home visits or community visits where the primary purpose is engagement with children.
- immediately raise with ABV any actual or proposed involvement of children in connection with ABV programs, services or activities.
- comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws, in relation to child labour.
- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- not engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, degrade or exploit children
- not personally engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the Australian Crimes Act 1914 (Cwlth) as amended), the child is under the age of 18 or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws.
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- not invite unaccompanied children into private accommodation (home or otherwise), unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- not sleep in close proximity to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary. Where unavoidable, supervisor approval is required and another adult should be present where possible.
- not use computers, mobile phones, video or digital cameras, or other electronic devices inappropriately, and never to exploit, harass or otherwise harm children, or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children.
- refrain from hiring 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, or which places them at significant risk of injury.
- refrain from using, promoting or allowing the use of alcohol or drugs in the presence of children.
- refrain from giving gifts to children when working on ABV programs.
- be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

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- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence which occurred before or occurs during my association with ABV that relate to child exploitation and abuse.
 - immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse in accordance with ABV's Child Protection Policy.
 - understand that, as ABV is not a child-focused organisation, I must avoid including children in photographs, videos or other visual material wherever possible. Children may only be included where their presence is incidental, unavoidable and demonstrably appropriate, and where such inclusion clearly and directly supports ABV's purpose and activities. Where children are included in visual material, I will comply with the requirements of ABV's Child Protection Policy.

Consequences of Breach

I understand that any breach of ABV's Child Protection Policy or Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including removal from an assignment or role, termination of employment/engagement, and/or reporting to relevant authorities where required.

(PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE)

(DATE)

Attachment C – Procedures Following a Child Abuse Allegation

1. Prioritisation of Victim-Survivor Needs

ABV will respond to any concerns or allegations of child exploitation, abuse or harm in a manner that prioritises the rights and needs of the victim-survivor. This includes ensuring they feel heard, supported and empowered throughout the process.

1.1 Core Principles

ABV will ensure that all responses are guided by the following principles:

- a. **Dignity and respect:** Treat all victim-survivors with dignity, respect and compassion.
- b. **Appropriate response to disclosures:** Respond promptly, sensitively and appropriately to disclosures, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the individual.
- c. **Confidentiality and privacy:** Protect privacy and confidentiality, including the secure handling, storage and sharing of information on a need-to-know basis.
- d. **Non-discrimination:** Ensure no discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other protected attribute.
- e. **Access to support services:** Support victim-survivors to access appropriate services, including counselling, medical care, psychosocial support, and other safeguarding measures where required.
- f. **Victim-survivor centred and trauma-informed approach:** Ensure reporting and response processes are victim-survivor centred, based on a 'do no harm' approach, and aligned with trauma-informed practice.

1.2 Confidentiality and Information Management

Confidentiality is a key principle in reporting and managing child protection concerns. Information must only be shared with the CEO, Compliance Officer, and relevant Program Lead(s). Names and details of reports must remain confidential. Information is disclosed only:

- a. On a “need to know” basis, or
- b. Where required by law or reporting obligations (e.g. police, regulatory or child protection authorities).

1.3 Good Faith Reporting and Protections

All reports made in good faith will be seen as being in the best interests of the child. ABV will protect the interests of anyone reporting concerns in good faith. ABV is committed to ensuring privacy, and support for the psychological and physical safety for individuals who report. Any ABV Personnel who intentionally makes false or malicious allegations may face disciplinary action.

2. STEP 1: Immediate Response

The CEO, in consultation with the Compliance Officer and Program Lead(s) (for overseas matters), must take the following immediate steps:

- a. Conduct a rapid risk assessment to identify urgent safety concerns.

Provide immediate victim-survivor support, including referrals to medical services, counselling, social support or legal assistance.

- b. Offer support to the reporter, witnesses and any other stakeholders.
- c. Document all actions taken, decisions made and reasons for those decisions.

3. STEP 2: Actions

3.1 If the alleged abuse occurred overseas:

The CEO, Compliance Officer and relevant Program Lead(s) must consider:

- a. Interviewing the reporter and/or any witnesses to gather further information either internally or using qualified experts.
- b. Reporting the matter to local police or child protection authorities, considering local laws and requirements.
- c. If the alleged perpetrator is an overseas citizen, whether reporting to their home country police (i.e. the Local Police or Australian Federal Police) or authorities is required or appropriate.
- d. Whether the matter can be managed internally if it is not considered a criminal issue or investigation required.
- e. Whether no further action is required, and ensuring the rationale is clearly documented.

3.2 If the alleged abuse occurred in Australia:

The CEO and Compliance Officer must determine appropriate action, which may include:

- a. Interviewing the reporter and/or any witnesses to gather further information either internally or using qualified experts.
- b. Reporting to local police and/or the relevant child protection authority.
- c. Reporting to the Australian Federal Police (AFP), particularly for offences involving Commonwealth jurisdiction or online exploitation.
- d. Whether the matter can be managed internally if it is not considered a criminal issue or external investigation required.
- e. Determining that no further action is required, with documented justification.

4. STEP 3: Internal Investigation of ABV Personnel (if required)

- a. If a report involves an ABV Personnel and an internal investigation is required, it will be conducted in a fair, impartial, and victim-survivor centred manner. The CEO and Compliance Officer will consider whether it is appropriate to engage qualified external specialists. In doing so, the following will be considered:
 - i. How independence and objectivity will be maintained throughout the investigation.
 - ii. What resources are available — internally or externally — to ensure the investigation is conducted competently and fairly, taking into account the complexity of the allegation, the level of risk, the skills required, and the need for specialist expertise (e.g. trauma-informed practice, or workplace misconduct investigations)

The investigation process will:

- a. Ensure the individual under investigation receives written notification of the allegations, including sufficient detail about the general nature of the concerns to enable a response.
- b. Be conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- c. Collect and manage evidence in a systematic, secure and confidential manner.
- d. Maintain detailed and confidential records of evidence, interviews and investigation activities.
- e. Require all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest to be declared and appropriately managed.
- f. Ensure findings and decisions are based on factual evidence.
- g. Provide interview participants with an opportunity to review and correct interview records or transcripts, where appropriate.
- h. Allow the alleged perpetrator to be accompanied by a support person or interpreter during interviews, where requested and appropriate.

- 5. STEP 4: Follow-up** Records (de-identified) shall be maintained of any investigation and conclusion and DFAT or any other regulatory bodies will be informed of investigation outcomes (where required).

6. Advice when responding to disclosure by a child

When a child discloses, they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- a. Listening carefully
- b. Telling the child/young person you believe him or her
- c. Telling the child/young person it is not their fault, and he/she is not responsible for the abuse

In no circumstance should you ever

- a. Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking any leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation)
- b. Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others not directly involved.

It is possible that a child or young person may disclose abuse and then ask you not to tell anyone. While this request may come from fear, shame, or concern about consequences, it is important to respond with reassurance and care. However, it must be made clear that disclosures of child abuse cannot be kept secret. All disclosures of actual or suspected child abuse must be reported, even when the child or young person asks you not to. Support and guidance should be sought from specialists, where needed, to ensure the child is appropriately supported, and the disclosure is managed safely and sensitively.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE FLOWCHART

📞 Australia/PNG: 000

📞 Solomon Islands: 988/999

📞 Vanuatu: 111/22222/22100

📞 Tonga: 911/922/999/933

📞 Samoa: 911

📞 Fiji: 911

📞 Naoero: 110

WHO CAN REPORT?

- All Applicable Persons (mandatory)
- Community members & participants encouraged

WHAT TO REPORT?

- Abuse, exploitation, harm (actual, suspected, or risk)
- Policy or Code of Conduct breaches

✅ When in doubt → **REPORT**

HOW TO REPORT?

- Verbally OR
- Submit Incident Form via Email: welfare@abv.org.au
- Complaints or Wrongdoing Procedure (www.abv.org.au)

AFTER REPORT RECEIVED

- CEO + Compliance Officer review
- Consider referral to authorities/police
- Notify Board/ Regulators (DFAT etc)

STEP 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

- Conduct rapid risk assessment
- Provide victim-survivor support
- Decide if investigation needed
- Support reporter & stakeholders
- Document all actions

STEP 2: ACTIONS

If Overseas: CEO/Compliance Officer/Program Lead

- Gather info (interviews)
- Report to local authorities/child protection
- Consider home-country authorities
- Decide: internal/external/no action

If Australia: CEO/Compliance Officer

- Gather info (interviews)
- Report to police/child protection
- Consider AFP involvement
- Decide: internal/external/no action

STEP 3: INTERNAL INVESTIGATION (if required)

If Overseas: Report to local authorities/child protection | If Australia: Report to police/child protection
• Gather info (interviews) • Consider home-country/AFP authorities • Decide: internal/external/no action

STEP 4: FOLLOW-UP

- Maintain de-identified records
- Notify regulators (e.g. DFAT if required)
- Feedback given where possible, protecting confidentiality

EXTERNAL REPORTING

- Inform required parties (DFAT, partners, funders)

Child Protection - DFAT: ⚠️ Report within 24hrs | ✉️ childprotection@dfat.gov.au | ☎️ +61 2 6178 5100
PSEAH- DFAT ⚠️ Report within 2 working days | ✉️ pseah.reports@dfat.gov.au or please telephone | ☎️ +61 2 6178 5100

