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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

This document sets out the Animals Fiji's Child Protection Policy and Procedures for all staff members, volunteers and interns as part of their obligation to Animals Fiji. The Policy is also available to others outside Animals Fiji who wants to know how Animals Fiji works in relation to child protection.

Animals Fiji does not work directly with children. However, we have undertaken to implement this policy in relation to any staff (including volunteer members) working overseas or here at home who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults, in the course of their work. We do not seek to impose our policy verbatim on the partner agencies, but we expect them to have in place and actively to implement a child protection policy consistent with our own and with the law of the country in which they work. For the purposes of this policy, Animals Fiji regards children and young people as those who are under the age of 18. The Animals Fiji's policy applies to all children and vulnerable adults with whom Animals Fiji has contact regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity.

Animals Fiji recognizes that vulnerable adults may also be in need of particular protection, and recognizes that the needs and concerns of this group may be different from those of children. Animals Fiji will extend this policy to include specific commitments relevant to this group. Animals Fiji intends that its child protection procedures will ensure a safe and protected environment for vulnerable adults in regard to Animals Fiji's work and activities. Animals Fiji intends that our commitment to the safety and protection of children in our international work should reflect the same values and principles that underpin our organizational policy commitments at home.

Guiding Principles

- Animals Fiji and all its staff and members, undertake to do all in our power to create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and to prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Animals Fiji is committed to acting at all times in the best interests of children and vulnerable adults, seeing these interests as paramount.
 - I. Animals Fiji will: Set in place and regularly monitor and review our procedures to protect: children; young people; and vulnerable adults. This policy covers Animals Fiji 's recruitment practice, staff training, and management responsibilities.
 - II. Animals Fiji will not allow those outlined in policy scope to ever work with children, if any risks are identified, including any risks identified during staff recruitment or any other time.
 - III. Adopt a code of behaviour for all staff and members.

- IV. Ensure that any allegations of abuse about staff or volunteer members working overseas or here at home (carrying out Animals Fiji work) are promptly and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account.
- V. All allegations of abuse of a child will be reported to the statutory bodies.
- VI. Ensure that Animals Fiji works in close liaison with statutory agencies when necessary so that risk to children and vulnerable adults is minimized.
- VII. Aim to be an example of best practice in the prevention of child abuse and in responding to it.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse occurs when adults or other children hurt children or young people under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults. Both boys and girls can suffer abuse. In the majority of cases, the abuser is someone the child or young person knows well, such as a parent, friend or relative.

There are four main kinds of abuse:

- Physical abuse is actual or likely physical injury to a child or vulnerable adult, such as hitting, kicking or shaking, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Emotional abuse is harm done by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection, such as degrading punishments, threats, not giving care and affection and bullying, resulting in adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person or vulnerable adult.
- Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth and medical care are not met, or when there is failure to protect a child or vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in serious impairment to their health or development.
- Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity (whether or not they are forced). Sexually abusive behaviours can involve incest, rape and fondling. It can also include non-contact activities such as showing pornography. Sexual abuse may involve siblings or other family members, or persons outside the family.

Abuse may be current or recent, or in some cases, historical, i.e. an adult may disclose sexual abuse that took place when he/she was a child. Abuse may be carried out by adult men or women, or by siblings or other young people. There are some groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable; children with disabilities are among these, and children from ethnic minority communities who may be particularly vulnerable if their communities suffer from discrimination.

Policy Scope

Staff and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at Animals Fiji and covers information about the reporting of harm and abuse.

PROCEDURES

Recruitment

Though it is unlikely that Animals Fiji staff or volunteer members will be in contact with children in the course of their work, if a role was to be assessed as including significant contact with children then appropriate child safe recruitment procedures would be implemented. This would include:

- Ensure a minimum of two verbal referee checks are conducted during recruitment
- Require a current police clearance certificate from the Fiji Police (or home country policy for foreign volunteers);
- Ask at least one question during recruitment interviews that presents a hypothetical scenario relating to child protection which the applicant must respond to;
- Ask the candidate to sign a declaration stating that they have not been charged with any child related offences.

Ensuring Awareness and Prevention

- Animals Fiji commitment to child protection will be stated in appropriate corporate documents and on our website. Animals Fiji will make its policy available to anyone who requests them.
- Animals Fiji will ensure that all staff and members are aware of the Child Protection Policy and have access to a copy. This will also form part of our training program for prospective members.
- Animals Fiji expects all staff and members to follow the code of behaviour (see pages eight and nine). Animals Fiji staff and members should make every effort to avoid situations in which they are lone adults working with one or more children.
- If urgent or practical circumstances result in such a situation occurring, staff and members should resolve it as soon as possible and note it to their managers. In any Animals Fiji activity involving children or vulnerable adults, their parents, teachers or other relevant responsible adults should be present.
- All managers have the responsibility for ensuring that the staff they manage are aware of the Policy and for reminding them of its provisions when the need arises.
- Any Animals Fiji staff or member planning events should ensure that child protection issues are considered as part of the risk analysis and/or health and safety arrangements.
- In planning or coordinating multi-agency or coalition or network organized events and activities, Animals Fiji will ensure that child protection considerations have been taken into account if relevant.

REPORTING

What should be reported?

Staff or volunteer members must report to Animals Fiji when they have a reasonable belief that a child has been harmed or is at potential risk of harm when it is due to the actions of a staff member, volunteer or partner of Animals Fiji.

Concerns that must be reported include:

- An observation or disclosure of actual harm or abuse to a child;
- An observation or disclosure of potential risk of harm to a child;
- A breach of the Animals Fiji Child Protection Policy or Code of Conduct for Working with Children;
- An observation of possession of child exploitation material.

Who do you need to report to?

A report must be made to one of the following (in order of priority):

- Direct manager or supervisor
- Head Office Manager or Outreach Manager
- Managing Trustee

How do you make a report?

Reports can be made in person or by telephone as soon as possible. Verbal reports should be followed up by completing and submitting the Child Protection Report Form.

Animals Fiji recognizes that disclosures (i.e. when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual) and suspicions (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) of a serious nature should always be reported to the statutory authorities who have sole responsibility for investigating complaints.

While the matter is being investigated by the statutory authorities the Animals Fiji member or volunteer may be asked to step aside from the activities of the organization. Animals Fiji will ensure that the process is handled with fairness, impartiality and in a timely manner.

If an allegation of child abuse is made involving Animals Fiji staff or a member, this allegation, together with a record of the investigation undertaken and the outcome, will be recorded in their personnel files. Confidentiality regarding these records will be scrupulously maintained and information will only be released to those in positions of authority.

If a member of Animals Fiji staff or anyone closely associated with Animals Fiji work in some recognizable capacity is found to have committed acts in relation to children which are criminal or which contravene in a serious way the principles and standards set out in this policy, Animals Fiji will take disciplinary action and/or any other action which may be appropriate to the circumstances. If members are found to have committed such acts, their membership of Animals Fiji will be ended.

Any information offered in confidence should be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant people in authority. Parents or guardian will also be informed if appropriate. Apart from this, careful confidentiality will be observed.

Responding

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult tells you they are being, or have been, abused:

- 1) Listen to and accept what they are saying.
- 2) Do not investigate, and do not inform, question or confront the alleged abuser.
- 3) Take the alleged abuse seriously.
- 4) Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- 5) Let them know you need to tell someone else. Do not promise total confidentiality.
- 6) Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult speak freely but do not press for information.
- 7) Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- 8) Record carefully (on the form below) what you have heard whilst it is still fresh in your mind. Include the date and time of your conversation and any incident disclosed.
- 9) If any staff or member suspects abuse, or if a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, or if a person external to Animals Fiji reports a suspicion or allegation relating to Animals Fiji staff, members or activities, the following steps should be taken:
- 10) Avoid any delay.

Code of Behaviour

There are some simple rules and procedures that will minimize the risk of an incident occurring or being alleged. Most of these are common sense and will already be followed, but it is important that staff and members specifically check that they are being implemented in any event which involves children, young people or vulnerable adults.

1. Treat everyone, including children, with respect, recognizing their right to personal privacy.
2. Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage them.
3. Plan and organize the event so that risks are minimized.
4. Recognize that caution is required in all one-to-one situations.
5. If it is a residential event, ensure that adults and children have separate sleeping accommodation.
6. Provide access for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk to others about any concerns they have.
7. Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
8. Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
9. Do not spend time alone with children – plan activities so that more than one adult is present or, at least, other people are within sight and hearing.
10. Do not take children alone in a car, even for short journeys, unless this is unavoidable for safety reasons. If this is unavoidable, make sure an adult guardian or another member of staff is aware it is happening.
11. Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
12. Do not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
13. Never using computers, mobile phones, video cameras, or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium; not using physical punishment on children
14. Avoid being drawn in to inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour, such as tantrums or crushes
15. Do not engage children under 18 in any form of sexual activity, including paying for sexual services; not inviting unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at risk.
16. Do not hire children for domestic or other labour.
17. Avoid showing favouritism to any individual.

18. Never make suggestive remarks or gestures, even in fun.
19. Do not trivialize or exaggerate child abuse issues.
20. Complying with local legislation and labour laws.
21. Immediately reporting concerns or allegations of child abuse or policy breaches.
22. immediately disclose all charges, convictions relating to child abuse.
23. Do not rely on just your good name to protect you.
24. Do not believe “It could never happen to me”

When Photographing or filming a child or using children’s images for work-related purposes:

1. Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.
2. Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.
3. 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 seen as sexually suggestive.
4. Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
5. Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING FORM

Part One: Person Reporting

- 1) CCF Staff / Member overseas (volunteer) / Local Volunteer (please circle relevant one)
- 2) Details of any other organization involved
- 3) Your relationship to the child or young persons or vulnerable adult concerned

Part Two: About the Child/Young Person(s)

- 1) Male or female?
- 2) Who does the child or young person live with?

Part Three: About Your Concern

- 1) How did you come to have a concern: was abuse observed or suspected?
- 2) Was an allegation made?
- 3) Did a child disclose abuse?
- 4) Date, time and place of any incident(s)
- 5) Nature of concern/allegation
- 6) Observations made by you (e.g. child's emotional state, any physical evidence)
- 7) Write down exactly what the child said and what you said: continue on a separate sheet if necessary.
- 8) Any other relevant information? (e.g. disability? language?)
- 9) Were other children involved or aware?
- 10) Have you reported to parents or guardian or any other Child Protection Personnel (including designated officer(s) and statutory authorities)?
- 11) Person(s) to whom report was made (Designated Child Protection Officer)
- 12) Time and date of reporting