



DOOR OF HOPE AUSTRALIA INC

PO Box 5014
Cheltenham East VIC 3192
Ph: 61 3 9584 9531
enquiries@doorofhope.com.au
www.doorofhopeaustralia.org

ABN: 44 901 023 508

DOHA CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Policy applies to all Door of Hope Australia Inc. (DOHA) Staff, Volunteers and Partners.

1. Statement of commitment:

- DOHA is committed to the welfare and rights of children. They will be treated with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status. This includes all children less than 18 years of age.
- DOHA is committed to protecting and providing a safe environment for children and staff. DOHA has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
- DOHA is committed to comply with all relevant local legislation on child rights and welfare in order to provide what is in 'best interest of the child' including labour laws that applies to children.
- DOHA encourages all staff to give respect and dignity to all children in their care. Child carers are encouraged to be good role models, spending time with each child, listening to them, encouraging children when they do something well and giving good explanations on why they should not do something else. They should keep their promises. They should provide discipline firstly through verbal means.
- It is the responsibility of the BD to ensure this policy and related procedures are implemented and enforced.

2. Different forms of child abuse are described:

Physical Abuse: Any punishments and physical abuse to children like beating including with a stick or other implement, poisoning, shaking and smothering or forcing the child to work in an unsafe way/environment. These are things that deliberately and negatively affect the physical well-being of children.

Mental Abuse: Any actions (gestures, words and behaviour) that deliberately affect a child's mental/emotional well-being for example by making them afraid, anxious, annoyed or discouraged.

Neglect: Any actions that deliberately neglect to provide the four essential rights of children (right to live, right to learn, right to participate and the right to speak).

Sexual Abuse: Any actions with sexual intent towards children such as touching children's genitals, forcing child to watch or take part in pornography or coercing the child to have sex .

3. Communicating the issue:

- DOHA is committed to informing children, decision makers, and the public through the media that child abuse is wrong. Keeping silent is also wrong.
- Child protection policies provide a safe and positive environment for children and are foundational in the education, research and advocacy initiatives that the DOHA is involved in.
- DOHA is committed to educating its staff about the importance of child protection so that children are protected from abuse by staff and others.
- DOHA actively encourages the development of child protection policies and active implementation of these policies to all NGO's, groups and networks in (country of operation) through its meetings with them.
- Where possible children are also included as key stakeholders because the DOHA believes that children have the right to speak and be heard. Involving them in the process also enables them to know their right to protection. Children are encouraged to have active cooperation, share information and be involved in advocacy initiatives.

4. Code of conduct for working with children:

Staff members and others are responsible for maintaining a professional role with children, which means establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationship.

All staff should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as a DOHA representative and a positive role model to children. DOHA has developed a child safe code of conduct to protect children, staff and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations.

DOHA's child safe code of conduct includes:

I WILL:

1. Comply with the DOHA Child Protection Policy and all relevant Australian and Overseas Child Protection Legislation.
2. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or during my association with DOHA.
3. Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of DOHA.
4. Respect all children and treat them equally regardless of gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background.
5. Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and respect cultural differences.
6. Encourage open communication between all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers and have children and young people participate in the decisions that affect them.
7. At all times be transparent in my actions and whereabouts.
8. Ensure that another adult is present when working with children, whenever possible.
9. Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
10. Self-assess my behaviour, actions, language and relationships with children.
11. Speak up when I observe concerning behaviours of colleagues and report any concerns of child abuse.
12. Be a positive role model for children.

I WILL NOT:

1. Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, degrade or exploit children.
2. Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, discriminatory, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
3. Provide children with alcohol or drugs or partake of them myself while working.
4. Not show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention; Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child.
5. Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
6. Take children to their own home/hotel or sleep in the same room or bed as a child.
7. Smack, hit or physically assault children.
8. Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
9. Condone or participate in, behaviour of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
10. Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
11. Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians, explaining how the data will be used. I will ensure that the images are honest, respectful, appropriate and non-identifying.
12. Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
13. Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the program times.
14. Use DOHA's computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.
15. Hire minors 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

5. Risk Assessment

DOHA recognises that there a number of potential risks to children in the delivery of our programs. In recognising these risks, we assess and manage risks to children in order to reduce the risk of harm. This is achieved by examining each activity and program and its potential impact on children.

- Identify the risks (brainstorm)
- Categorise the risks (similar events/causes)
- Rate the risks (common, possible, unlikely, rare, very rare)
- Estimate the severity of consequences (severe, major, moderate, minor, negligible)
- Combine the rate with the severity to determine the risk level
- Address the identified risks
- Assign responsibility for risk management
- Continually assess these risks throughout all stages of the project (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).

6. Recruitment and Screening

DOHA is committed to child safe recruitment, selection and screening practices.

DOHA will not knowingly engage – directly or indirectly – anyone who poses a risk to children. These practices aim to recruit the safest and most suitable people to work in our programs.

Our child safe practices include:

- Promoting our child safe commitment on our website, in other promotional materials and in all job advertisements.
- All applicants will receive a copy of DOHA's CSP and be informed of the screening requirements when they are sent the application form.

Screening is equally important for volunteers/interns, BD and consultants and will be ongoing. A 'Working with Children's Check' card (for Australian staff) and Police checks (for overseas staff) are mandatory before employment/position is offered and must be renewed every three years. Nb# Where Police check is unavailable then multiple reference checks are required.

References should be checked preferably by telephone to give previous employers an opportunity to express concerns verbally.

Recruitment screening processes for all personnel working with children will include the additional screening measure of being asked behavioural-based interview questions. Behavioural-based questions will be used to ask for examples of the candidate's past behaviour and experiences. In positions working directly working with children, explore the candidate's motivations for working with children, which will include value-based questions seeking information about the candidate's attitudes to children, professional boundaries, accountability, team work and how they have responded to concerns about children and other ethical dilemmas

All staff will be required to provide proof of identify including birth certificate, passport, drivers licence and relevant qualifications. Original documents are required.

All positions will be subject to a probationary period depending on the length of the contract. Child protection will be included in staff performance reviews.

All personnel, staff, volunteers and partners will be required to read and sign DOHA's Child Protection Code of Conduct.

DOHA reserves the right to refuse employment or terminate any person's employment that may pose a risk to children. Employment contracts will contain provisions for the prevention of a person working with children if they present an unacceptable risk to children.

This may include suspension or transfer to other duties for any employee who is under investigation and provisions to dismiss any employee after an investigation or who breaches the DOHA's Child Protection Code of Conduct.

7. Responses to Allegations

Who should report?

All DOHA staff and others (including people in the community and partner organisations) should report if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child needs protection or that an offense has been committed.

When should reports be made?

A report should be made immediately or within 48 hours where practical.

What should be reported?

- Any disclosure or allegation from a child/community member or staff regarding the safety/abuse exploitation of a child.

- Any observation or concerning behaviour exhibited by an DOHA staff, volunteer or other relevant stakeholder that breaches the DOHA code of conduct for working with children.
- Inappropriate use of the organisation's photographic equipment or computers including evidence of child pornography.
- Staff engaging in suspicious behaviour that could be associated with sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Who to report to?

Overseas and In Australia:

The Project Manager (PM) is the focal person for all reporting, however reports may also be made to the Chairman of the Board (CB).

Reports or complaints may be made verbally or in writing to the CB or PM or via the DOHA Website under contacts: www.doorofhopeaustralia.org

CB Bryan Grasby bgrasby@doorofhope.com.au 0418 552 042

PM Michelle van Zanen mvanzanen@doorofhope.com.au 0404 866 389

In all Australian states and territories, sexual and physical abuse of children is a crime. The age of consent in most Australian states and territories is 16. However it is important to check in each jurisdiction as the age limit may be different. Additionally, in some jurisdictions it is a criminal offence for persons who are in positions of power and trust (e.g. teacher, parent, carer) to engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18.

Reporting child abuse can either be made to the local state police or the state child protection authorities. If there is an allegation or suspicion of child sexual abuse by a staff member or volunteer in the organisation, these matters will be reported to the state police. In most Australian states there are specialised units dealing with child sexual crimes.

If there are concerns that a child is being sexually abused by someone external to the organisation, DOHA will contact the state police and/or child protection authorities.

1. All incidents will be handled in a way which upholds the principles of: protection of all parties involved, confidentiality, expedient reporting, truthfulness, fairness and professionalism.
2. All members of the team will encourage their staff to be open in discussing the potential of abuse in their organisation.

3. **Immediately** report concerns or allegation of child abuse to PM (or CB if they are the alleged abuser).
4. Where an allegation is made, either by a child, parents, staff member or visitor then staff are to document the allegation * in as much detail as possible * on the 'DOHA Child Safeguarding Form' and then the DOHA will investigate and take the appropriate action to deal with the situation.
5. There should be a designated person whose responsibility is to be responsible for dealing with child protection issues in the organisation.
6. Relationships with other organisations are encouraged for accountability and support in times such as these.
7. Both victim (and perpetrator) will be treated with respect from the start of the process to the end.
8. Children rarely lie in situations like this so their story must be heard and believed unless proven otherwise. They may also require extra protection if the perpetrator has not been arrested.
9. The organisation will have a reporting procedure where the Director is informed and then others as the need arise.
10. Records should be made of all facts related to the investigation in the incident log book, which must be kept confidential.
11. The relevant Embassy should be informed if a foreigner is involved.
12. There should be a person designated to deal with the media and the police. Where possible consideration will be made beforehand by the organisations leadership about how the police and media will be informed or involved.

8. Use of children's images and personal information for promotion, fundraising and development education

When photographing or filming a child for work related purposes, DOHA must:

- Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Obtain consent from the child AND a parent or guardian of the child. This must be explained to them how the photograph or film will be used.

- 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.
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically.

9. Responding to disclosure by a child

When a child/young person tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger and sometimes disbelief.

If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously.

It is important for you to remain calm and in control and to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

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

- Listening carefully
- Telling the child/young person you believe him or her
- Telling the child/young person it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
- Telling the child/young person you are pleased he/she told you.

You will not be helping the child/young person if you:

- Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone
- 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)
- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved.

Try and obtain some details such as where the abuse is taking place, school, home, work etc; is it currently occurring or did occur in the past, name of perpetrator if possible but not necessary.

It is possible that some children or young people will make a disclosure and then ask you not to tell anyone. It is important you seek guidance from CPO to discuss how the child or young person can be supported and the disclosure managed.

10. Other actions to take

Protect the child

- Once an allegation is made there should be an immediate response that protects the child from further potential abuse or victimization. The child may require medical assistance or counselling support. Where possible the child should remain in the relevant program.
- Exceptions may be made where the child is deemed to be at risk of victimization by peers as a result of the allegation or because the alleged abuse has occurred in home-based care. If the child is in immediate danger you should make arrangements for the child to go to a safe place.

Distance the alleged perpetrator

- The best interest of the child may warrant the standing down of a staff member or volunteer. HR should recommend the appropriate action in writing to the CB.
- Any staff member stood down in this manner continues to receive full pay – this measure recognizes that that the member is entitled to a just process that does not pre-judge guilt or innocence.
- Any volunteers who are stood down should similarly receive any reasonable reimbursement of costs.

Confidentiality

- All reports, the names of people involved and the details will remain confidential. Only the CPO, PM and the CB, and the people involved will be informed of the report.
- Details will be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by relevant local or Australian law or a notification to police or child protection authorities is made.

Involving children and young people

- DOHA is committed to child and youth participation. We will do this by providing opportunities for children’s views to be heard and incorporate their views into our policies and programs. Children will be asked for their feedback about staff and services.

- They will be consulted in the development and review of the CPP and will be asked to contribute to the child safe code of conduct in regards to what they consider to be appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.
- Children will also be informed about the DOHA child abuse reporting process and who to contact if they are at risk, have been abused or are concerned about another child.

Educating the organisation on child abuse and the child protection policy

- DOHA is committed to educating staff and others in the CPP, in how to reduce risks and create child safe environments.
- We will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organisation and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work.
- This information will include reporting child abuse if they have concerns about a DOHA member of staff or other representative in the organisation.

DOHA has a zero tolerance approach to illegal, exploitive or abusive behaviour which risks the safety and well being of children. Any such behaviour will be dealt with by DOHA and will possibly lead to termination of employment or conclusion of volunteer arrangement.

I, agree to abide to this Child Protection Policy.
I declare that I have not had any previous convictions for abuses against children or violent behaviour.

I confirm that any future employers will be informed if I am dismissed for abuse.

Signed: Date: ____ / ____ / 20 ____

Reviewing the DOHA Child Safeguarding Policy

DOHA Child Safe guarding Policy will be reviewed every two years.