

Child Protection and International Minimum Standards.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade provides a commitment to the Humanitarian, Peace Keeping and Development sectors to 'do no harm'. Delivery partners are required to meet the responsibilities set by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and that the delivery partner reports any concerns about a child's safety to the appropriate agency and to MFAT in line with this policy.

These standards are designed to assist MFAT delivery partners to meet their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children. It identifies the minimum standard and provides examples of how to evidence assurance of the standard.

Identifying, acknowledging risks and implementing measures to address them is fundamental to delivery partners strategies and governance. Even with the most robust child protection and safeguarding procedures, children can remain at risk and incidents of harm occur. At that point it is how the service delivery partner responds that is crucial for the ongoing safety of the children involved.

Why have Standards?

Standards are used widely in all sectors to ensure quality in the delivery of services and accountability. Standards will help ensure protection and minimise the risk of harm to children. Implementing standards will provide clarity about expectations on behaviour with children and what to do if children are at risk, or have been harmed, protecting the organisations reputation and guiding them to move towards international best practice.

To achieve MFAT standards delivery partners need to consider:

- When, where and how your organisation affects children and the risks associated to harm
- What policies and procedures are needed to mitigate and prevent harm to children and how to respond to those concerns appropriately and with the child's interests as a paramount consideration
- Who is the appropriate designated focal point to receive, respond and manage any safeguarding concerns and subsequent inquiry/investigation.
- Safe recruiting and training for assurance that staff know what the organisation expects of them and how to manage reports of concern.
- A clear code of conduct for staff to understand their professional boundaries when working with children. Appropriate, acceptable, and unacceptable behaviours.

Requirement	Minimum standard	Minimum standard evidence	Why is this required?	What is the risk without it?
POLICY Having a Child Protection Policy and reporting procedure in place	Partner The organisation has a child protection policy or equivalent that applies to all delivery partner personnel, partner’s downstream personnel and subcontractors that are engaged by the organisation to perform any part of a MFAT IDC funded activity. The managing partner must ensure the downstream organisation or individual subcontractor complies with and aligns to MFAT minimum standards as set in this document. Individuals An individual contractor is not required to have a child protection policy. However, they will be required to sign a code of conduct or declaration that applies and builds on, where appropriate, MFAT’s delivery partners code of conduct and to provide evidence of their commitment to child protection.	Partners - Child protection policy in place which sets out what the delivery partner will do to prevent harm against children. - Personnel are aware of the organisation’s child protection policy (e.g. through internal communication and training). - There is a documented plan for ensuring downstream partners are meeting the minimum standards. - Initial risk assessment of organisation and activities to inform policy development. Individuals - Attend child protection training. - Sign code of conduct. - Commitment to child protection. - Current local Criminal Record Check.	A child protection policy provides clear guidance to everyone that children must be protected and not put at risk of harm because of the delivery partners contact with, or impact on, them. This also demonstrates how the organisation, across its operations, will ensure that children are protected from child exploitation and abuse in the delivery of IDC funded programs.	- An organisation is unaware of the risks to children within their organisation and the activities they manage and/or implement. - Having a sub-contractor sign up to a code of conduct as the only control does not provide sufficient contractual effect to address child protection issues.
	1. The organisation’s child protection policy includes a documented reporting procedure for child exploitation and abuse allegations, code of conduct and policy non-compliance, including sanctions for breaches.	- Organisation’s guidelines for managing concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse, and policy non-compliance. - Documentary evidence that personnel can raise concerns about a child’s safety or well-being or unacceptable behaviour by personnel. - Documentary evidence outlining the organisation’s details of available and appropriate sanctions. - Documentary evidence that policy and reporting information is publicly available and accessible to all including members of the public and community. - Delivery partners must be able to demonstrate that all incidents are managed, reported and investigated in a timely and consistent manner and in alignment with the MFAT child protection principles. - Procedures must ensure that incidents are	- One of the biggest hurdles to personnel reporting child exploitation and abuse is that there is no formal system in place to do so, or that personnel or community members are not aware of a formal system to report concerns or allegations. - Reporting systems must respect the rights of both the alleged victim-survivor and the alleged perpetrator of harm and must include ‘whistleblowers’ process.	- Personnel are unaware how to report concerning behaviour. - Children are unaware how to report concerning behaviour. - Community members are unaware how to report concerning behaviour. - Harm towards children is perpetuated due to lack of visibility around reporting.

		escalated to senior management and reported to MFAT in line with reporting standards set out in the Child Protection Policy.		
	2. The organisation's child protection policy includes a commitment to preventing a person from working with children if they pose any risk to children.	Referenced in relevant documentation, including policies, contracts, and human resource guidelines.	The organisation, as an employer, must have clear processes to determine whether a person is safe to work with children.	A lack of leadership and governance and the right culture undermine personnel efforts to implement a child protection environment.
	3. The organisation's child protection policy is subject to regular review, at least every four years or earlier.	Policy is subject to regular review in accordance to the policy commitment, or at least every four years.	- Contexts change, particularly in the development and humanitarian sectors. There must be a commitment to review and update the policy as required. - Evidences as a reminder that the safety of children in a complex world is dynamic and the protection of children is a commitment to cultural and behavioural change and improvements including leader lead.	- Lessons learned from previous incidents are not taken into account, increasing the likelihood that those risks will be repeated. - Language, standards and response is outdated, ineffective or harmful.
	4. The organisation provides child protection training for personnel, including downstream partners	- Training attendance records. - Training agendas and timeframes for training. - Materials used in training.	Personnel must be fully aware of their responsibilities to protect children and how to report concerns or allegations about child exploitation and abuse.	Personnel are unaware of behaviour that would raise concern or how to report this or what they need to do to build child protection practices into their work.
PROCEDURE Safeguarding and protection policy commitments are integrated into existing organisational processes and systems	5. The organisation creates a child safe environment through implementing child safeguarding procedures and undertakes a risk assessment to reduce the risk of any child being harmed as a result of operations or activities funded by MFAT IDC programme.	- Risk plan identifying activities and measures to mitigate, manage or remove the risk to children. - Documentation that risk assessments are reviewed and updated regularly during the life of the activity. - Evidence of local mapping exercises which provide insights on legal, social welfare and child protection arrangements. Child safeguarding risk assessments and adaption to local context (when a different approach to standard risk controls is required). - A response and reporting process for incidents and concerns of harm is developed and relevant to local setting.	Some activities are higher risk than others. This may be due to the nature of the activity or the location. For example, working with children with disability or in an emergency situation involve higher risks.	- Risks to children are missed during activity design and implementation. - Standards may not be locally or globally relevant.
PEOPLE	6.	Employment contracts contain appropriate provisions and sanctions for any employee who is under, or following, investigation.	Robust recruitment, screening and employment practices reinforce the importance of the	Personnel that pose unacceptable risks to children are unable to be removed (suspended,

Recruitment and screening, and employment practices in place	The delivery partner places clear responsibilities and expectation on its staff and supports them to understand and act in line with these.	• Key staff are designated at different levels as ‘focal points’ with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. • There are written guidelines for inappropriate behaviour towards children. • All new employees receive child safeguarding policy training as part of their induction programme and ongoing training as relevant to their engagement with children within their service delivery responsibilities.	organisation’s child protection policy to personnel.	transferred or terminated) without a criminal conviction.
	7. Contact with children positions The organisation has robust recruitment screening processes for all personnel in contact with children. These recruitment procedures include: • Global criminal record checks before engagement. • verbal referee checks. Working with children positions Additional screening measures (such as interview plans that incorporate behavioural-based interview questions) must be used when candidates are applying for positions that involve working with children.	• Documented criminal record checks for personnel in contact with children. • Documented verbal referee checks. • Documented request for an applicant to disclose whether they have been subject to an allegation and/or charged with child exploitation offences, and their response. • Interview plans incorporating behavioural-based interview questions that are specific to positions that involve working with children. • Review checks when personnel have a change in circumstances. • Checks must be conducted for each country in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer over the last 5 years, and for the individual’s countries of citizenship.	• Child-safe recruitment and screening processes are essential to enable an organisation to choose the most appropriate person for a position that involves contact with children. • Recruitment and selection can prevent access to children by those with a known history of harming children. • Child safe recruitment and selection processes can discourage individuals who pose an unacceptable risk to children from applying for positions.	• Your organisation may be targeted by adults who wish to harm children (due to weak recruitment and screening practices). • A person who poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children (as indicated by their background) is unknowingly appointed to a position within the organisation.
	8. The organisation has a code of conduct that meets and – builds on (where appropriate) – the minimum standard set by MFAT Policy.	• A risk-based child protection code of conduct. • All new employees must receive a copy of the child safeguarding policy and code of conduct. Signed copies must be placed on their personal file. • Staff with designated responsibilities for child safeguarding have access to advice and support where concerns or incidents arise.	• A code of conduct makes clear the organisation’s standards for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to children, including use of images and must be signed by all personnel. • It protects personnel by providing guidance on how to avoid situations that may be perceived as harmful to children. • It also provides employers with a sound basis on which to conduct disciplinary action.	• Lack of clear, well-advertised rules allows concerning behaviour to go unchallenged. • Identification of a child and/or their whereabouts.

ACCOUNTABILITY The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures	9. The organisation has measures and processes in place for review and monitoring of safeguarding measures to ensure	• Child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. • Regular and appropriate reporting on incidents of harm that identify incidents and address outcomes. • Risk registers and audit reports are developed and actively managed. Must have effective risk management assessments and mitigations in place that consider the risk of harm on children.	• It will provide transparency of protective measures and child centric response. • Being accountable is also ensuring policies are implemented and integrated throughout the entire organisation.	