



<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	February 2025
AKFA-POL_022	<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2026
	<b>Sponsor(s)</b>	Global Safeguarding Lead Country Director
	<b>Approval/Authorisation</b>	Board

## 1. AKF Australia's Safeguarding Commitment

AKF Australia is committed to respectful relations with and between all staff, associates, beneficiaries and wider communities with whom it works, and takes all reasonable measures to prevent harm, including all forms of exploitation, abuse, bullying, harassment and abuse of power that may arise from contact with its staff, programmes or operations.

AKF Australia defines safeguarding as the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and adults at-risk nor expose them to abuse or exploitation. This term covers physical, emotional and sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse by staff and associated personnel, as well as safeguarding risks caused by programme design and implementation.<sup>1</sup>

AKF Australia defines an at-risk adult as any person aged 18 years and older who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependence or reliance on others for services, basic needs or protection, and according to context, for example, in humanitarian situations. An adult may also be at risk or vulnerable when in a relationship (social or work) with another who seeks to misuse their position of authority or trust to control, coerce, manipulate or dominate them. They may also be at risk if their decision-making capacity is impaired and/or they do not have the support to make a decision.

Being at risk is not a 'fixed' characteristic but rather changes due to a range of factors, and can change over time. For example, a person living with a disability may not be at risk in their own usual environment, but may become so if they are displaced and away from their usual coping mechanisms.

AKF's programmes can put our staff in a position of relative power over communities we seek to assist. This means that adults with whom we come into contact may be at risk of harm, exploitation or abuse. This can be amplified by other intersecting factors such as living with disability, age, SOGIE (sexual orientation or gender identity), and ethnic heritage. Therefore this policy may also apply to any adults who come into contact with AKF staff and programmes.

<sup>1</sup> CHS Alliance PSEAH Implementation Quick Reference Handbook 2020



## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect children and young people from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with AKF Australia staff, associated personnel or programmes and activities, and to detect and respond appropriately to safeguarding cases. This policy should be used in **conjunction with** AKF Australia's overarching Safeguarding Policy.

Specific additional policies are in place to apply to:

### I. **Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy**

This policy protects people who come into contact with AKF Australia, including staff, from sexual exploitation abuse and harassment by AKF Australia staff and associated personnel.

### II. **Safeguarding of children and young people policy**

This policy This policy protects children and young people from harm caused by AKF staff, associated personnel, and programme design and delivery.

All people must be treated with dignity and respect. There is zero tolerance for sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment (SEAH), neglect or other misconduct by AKF staff, representatives or partners.

AKF's work is based on the principles of international conventions and instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. AKF's safeguarding policy is in line with international standards and recommendations such as the CHS Alliance Core Humanitarian Standard and OECD DAC Recommendations on PSEAH.

AKF Australia will respond to safeguarding reports from any time period – there is no statute of limitations for safeguarding cases. AKF Australia will accept anonymous safeguarding reports. Where this policy is more stringent than local legislation, this policy will apply.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all AKF Australia personnel and stakeholders, including permanent and temporary staff, Board Directors, external service providers, contractors and consultants, interns, researchers, volunteers, and visitors—such as journalists, photographers, donors, staff from other AKF units or AKDN agencies, and representatives of other organisations. It also applies to implementing or other partners unless they maintain their own safeguarding policy of a similar or higher standard.

AKF Australia requires all staff, volunteers and representatives to commit in writing to upholding the principles and standards in this Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and the associated Code of Conduct, through a Statement of Commitment (Annex 1).



Partner commitments will be reflected in specific clauses in their written agreements with AKF Australia. (see Annex II for examples of these). A separate Code of Conduct for Visitors (see sample at Annex IV) will apply to all visitors.

## 4. Safeguarding Standards:

- Standard 1** AKF Australia will ensure a workplace culture built on respect, that delivers a safe and inclusive environment for all staff.
- Standard 2** AKF Australia's safeguarding policy commitments are integrated into existing organizational processes and systems and, where necessary, new procedures will be introduced.
- Standard 3** AKF Australia has measures and mechanisms in place for monitoring and reviewing safeguarding measures and for both upward and downward accountability in relation to safeguarding.
- Standard 4** Everyone connected with the organisation has the knowledge, attitude and skills to keep children and adults safe.
- Standard 5** AKF Australia staff are aware of the organisation's commitment to their safety and wellbeing in the workplace and feel able to raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously.
- Standard 6** Children and families understand AKF Australia commitments to safeguarding and know what to do if concerns arise. AKF Australia responds appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Standard 7** Partners have safeguarding measures in place, which are consistent with AKF Australia's standards
- Standard 8** AKF Australia will ensure robust protection for anyone who raises a concern or makes a complaint regarding breach of safeguarding policy.

## 5. Policy Statement

The Safeguarding Policy details obligations, responsibilities and commitments made by AKF Australia, staff, managers and the Board Directors, along with the consequences of non-compliance.

**AKF Australia will ensure that the following measures are in place specifically to safeguard adults at risk:**

- Enhanced screening practices are put in place for recruitment to positions with direct or indirect contact with adults at risk. AKF Australia will not knowingly employ any individual with a criminal conviction related to vulnerable groups or other such offences related to their prospective position.



Recruitment screening processes will include criminal record checks before engagement. Where checks are unavailable or unreliable, statutory declarations or legal equivalents will be obtained. Checks will cover all countries in which the individual has lived for 12 months or longer in the past five years, as well as their countries of citizenship. Verbal referee checks and behavioural-based interview questions will be used for all candidates applying for roles involving contact with children.

- Employees who will, or do, have contact with adults at risk will have opportunities to understand how to interact with adults at risk, identify concerns, receive disclosures appropriately and report within the timeframe required to ensure the adult at risk is not put at further risk of harm.
- Programmes and projects will be assessed for the risk harm for beneficiaries (including adults at risk). Reasonable risk mitigation measures will be incorporated into the design and delivery of the programme.
- Programmes or projects involving adults who might be deemed 'at risk' (e.g. they have particular disabilities, or are in circumstances, that might increase their risk of harm and abuse) will ensure that the adults (or their carers) understand what participation in the programme or project involves, consent to it and have the necessary care or support arrangements in place to be able to participate safely.
- Each programme or project will conduct community awareness raising sessions with communities on AKF commitments to safeguarding and protecting them from harm. This will be done using language and content appropriate messaging and include explicit reference to acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by AKF staff and associates.
- Agreements with partners, suppliers etc. will include how they and AKF will work together to safeguard adults at risk in the programmes or services being delivered.
- All personnel will receive safeguarding induction training upon engagement and refresher training at regular intervals, with additional training for staff working in higher-risk roles or contexts.
- Safeguarding concerns, breaches or incidents will be reported to donors where required under funding agreements.
- This policy will be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier if required by legislation, donor requirements or organisational needs.

### 6. Related documents

- AKFA Australia Code of conduct
- AKFA Safeguarding Policy\_2025
- AKFA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy\_2025
- AKFA Anti-Discrimination Bullying and Harassment Policy
- AKFA PSEAH policy



## 7. References

- OECD DAC Recommendations on PSEAH
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principles and Standards for PSEA
- The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ILO Convention 190 (2019) on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- ACFID Code of Conduct

## 8. Revision History

AKF Australia will review and update this policy every three years, unless changes are required earlier, to ensure relevance and applicability.

Date	Revision Number	Change(s)	Reference Section(s)
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	1	New Policy	

## Annexe 1: Statement of Commitment

This Statement of Commitment to Aga Khan Foundation Australia’s Safeguarding Adults at risk Policy must be signed by all AKF Australia staff and representatives, as defined in this policy.

I \_\_\_\_\_, have received, read and understood the contents of the AKF Australia Safeguarding Adults at risk Policy.

By signing below, I acknowledge my commitment to uphold the principles outlined in this Policy. I understand that breaching this policy is considered a serious offence and carries with it disciplinary action, including possible termination, and if criminal activity is suspected, reporting to the relevant authorities.

I understand that my actions reflect AKF Australia’s values and contribute to a safe, ethical, and respectful workplace for all. I understand that this policy applies 24 hours a day.

I understand that in the event of any changes or updates to this Statement, I will be required to re-sign it.

Name (printed)

Date

Designation/Role

Signature

## Annexure 2: Reporting

### What to do if you have a safeguarding concern

**If the concern relates to a child under 18, you should report the concern in confidence immediately to the relevant authorities or through one of the routes**

### Options for reporting

You can remain anonymous if you wish.

#### 1. LINE MANAGER/ SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT

Speak to your **line manager, Safeguarding Manager/Focal Point or other designated person** (for more details on all available Speak Up channels please refer to Annex 2) as soon as possible. You do not need to have all the facts or details. This will ensure that the matter is addressed promptly before it becomes a more serious problem.

**The Safeguarding Focal Point for AKF Australia is Afshin Ghassmi**

**Contact details:** Email: [afshin.ghassmi@akdn.org](mailto:afshin.ghassmi@akdn.org)

Mob: +61 (0) 432 178 039

#### 2. SENIOR MANAGER

If you are uncomfortable speaking to one of these individuals, or if you believe that the person is implicated in the concern, or you have reported the concern previously and it was not taken seriously, you have the right to raise it to any other staff member, such as a senior manager or the Global Safeguarding Lead, or a member of the HR Team.

If you wish, you may contact **AKF's Global Safeguarding Lead, AKF's Global Director of Operations, and/or AKDN's HR Director & AKF Human Resources Committee Board member** (see Annex 4 for details)

#### 3. SAFECALL SPEAK UP SERVICE

You can also use the Safecall 'speaking up' hotline or web platform, which is an external, independent service provider available for AKFA staff. This service is available 24 hours a day and you can talk to someone in your own language. The call handlers will take details of your concern and then pass this on to AKF Geneva (Head Office). You can remain completely anonymous if you wish.

See more details here: <https://www.safecall.co.uk/>

**24/7 Hotline number (Australia): 1 800 312 928**

**Web portal: <https://www.safecall.co.uk/file-a-report/>**



## 4. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

If your concern relates to a potential breach of the law, you can also refer directly to the relevant local authorities. If the report alleges criminal activity, you may also refer the report to the relevant local authorities, if it is safe to do so. Referral must be safe for all concerned, particularly the survivor, and therefore AKF Australia may wish to undertake a risk assessment before referring to local authorities. The survivor's consent must be sought for a referral to take place, unless they are a child under the age of 18, in which case the best interests of the child takes precedence.

Refer to the AKF Australia Whistleblower policy for further details.

AKF Australia will also accept complaints/ safeguarding reports about incidents caused by the organisation or its representative from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### What will happen?

1. AKF Australia will take all complaints that are raised seriously and will handle them in a consistent, timely and fair manner
2. AKF Australia will take appropriate steps to ensure there is no retaliation against an employee who raises a complaint/speaks up.
3. AKF Australia will deal with all complaints confidentially and all those involved will be expected to keep their involvement and all details relating to the complaint confidential.
4. Employees who wish to report cases of sexual harassment will have their case considered by male or female staff representatives at all points in the process.

**Staff and volunteers in all countries have a right to access AKF's Employees Assistance Programme. Please refer to the AKF Australia Staff Handbook for details for such assistance.**



### **Annex 3: Speak Up Contact details**

#### **AKF Global Safeguarding Lead**

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#### **AKDN HR Director & AKF Human Resources Committee member**

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Mob. +33 675077437

#### **SAFECALL**

<https://www.safecall.co.uk/file-a-report/>

Tel (Australia): 1800 312928

For other numbers: <https://www.safecall.co.uk/file-a-report/telephone-numbers/>