

# Child Protection policy



## 1. Introduction and preamble

GWM is a non-denominational community development organisation that partners with local organisations and individuals in communities to help them achieve improvement and sustainability in their quality of life. Through five key focus areas including education, health, peacebuilding, WASH and livelihoods, GWM invests in practical programs and projects that take a holistic approach.

GWM recognises its responsibility to children and this policy sets out our commitment to promote the rights and safety of children and protect children from abuse, harm and exploitation. It aims to ensure that any children who come into contact with GWM programs, projects, activities and personnel are treated with respect.

## 2. Statement on commitment to child protection

GWM is committed to the protection of children from abuse, harm and exploitation by:

- Promoting the rights of all children
- Providing the safest possible environments and programs for children
- Acknowledging that every child has the right to survival, development, protection and participation as stated in the United Nations Convention on Human Rights of the Child (UNCHRC)

GWM is committed to the rights of children and treats all children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth or other status.

GWM is committed to comply with all relevant local legislation on child rights and welfare in order to provide what is in the 'best interest of the child' including labour laws that apply to children.

## 3. Purpose of the policy

The CPP demonstrates GWM commitment to protect children from abuse, harm and exploitation and promote the rights, safety and well-being of all children. Additionally, the CPP provides guidance to all personnel engaged with GWM on how to engage respectfully and effectively with all children, and procedures on how to report any concerns regarding the safety of children.

## 4. Guiding principles

GWM values, principles and beliefs are:

- Every child has a right to be safe and a right to protection from all abuse, harm and exploitation.
- Any form of child abuse is never acceptable.
- We have a responsibility to protect children with and for whom we work and provide child safe and friendly programs, projects, activities and environments.
- We have a responsibility to ensure all personnel are aware of their responsibilities when working with children.

## 5. Scope of the policy

The CPP applies to all personnel engaged with GWM on a short-term or permanent basis. Personnel includes board members, consultants, volunteers, partners and those engaged in one-off projects/programs for GWM. This includes all international staff, volunteers and personnel.

GWM is committed to educating all people engaged with GWM about the importance of child protection and how to reduce risks and create child safe environments. GWM actively encourages the development of child protection policies and practices and the implementation

of such policies and practices to all NGO's, groups and networks in activities and meetings in Australia and Myanmar that involve children.

Where possible children are also included as key stakeholders because GWM believes that every child has the right to speak and be heard. Involving children in the process also enables them to know their right to protection.

The CPP and Code of Conduct will be included in the guide provided to all personnel working with GWM and information will be sent to new members/supporters and in the pre-travel information sent to team members and others travelling to Myanmar with GWM.

GWM is committed to ensuring that the child protection principles are included in program planning.

## **6. Code of conduct for working with children**

All personnel are required to agree to the Child Protection Code of Conduct attached to this policy (see attachment 1).

## **7. Child protection risk management**

GWM is committed to ensuring that all programs, projects and activities undertaken in Australia and Myanmar are designed having conducted a risk assessment and developed a strategy to manage and minimise identified risks.

Risks are a natural part of any program, project or activity and risk management therefore is an ongoing part of every activity. Whilst there may be common risks to different programs, projects or activities, it is essential to analyse and assess each on its own merits and ensure that a program specific strategy is developed and implemented.

The six key stages of GWM risk management cycle are:

1. IDENTIFY  
It is crucial to search for and identify risks before they become major problems.
2. ANALYSE  
In order to transform risk data into useful information it must be analysed; the likely impact, probability of occurrence, likely timeframe and priority of tracking likely risks.
3. PLAN  
'Risk Management Plan' that translates the information into actions and decisions.
4. TRACK  
Monitor the risk in accordance with the action in the Risk Management Plan.
5. CONTROL  
Take any corrective action required to keep the Risk Management Plan on track.
6. COMMUNICATE  
Provide information and feedback to all internal and external stakeholders regarding current risks, emerging risks and action being taken.

## **8. Responding and reporting**

GWM considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. GWM takes all concerns, allegations and reports of child abuse seriously and acts on these reports immediately, as well as any alleged breach by personnel of the Code of Conduct.

Where an allegation has been made that a person engaged with GWM on a short-term or permanent basis, including board members, consultants, volunteers and those engaged in one-off projects/programs for GWM has abused or exploited a child or breached the Code of Conduct, GWM will investigate and take appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Key aspects of this process involve:

- Ensure the victim is provided with medical care if required and is in a safe environment.
- Ensure children in these situations are heard and validated unless proven otherwise. They may also require additional protection if the perpetrator has not been arrested.
- Ensure both the affected child (and alleged perpetrator) are treated with respect throughout the entire process and are referred to appropriate services where necessary.
- Identify a designated person responsible for dealing with the media and police. Where possible, consideration will be made beforehand by the GWM Board about how the media and/or police will be informed or involved.
- Encourage relationships with other organisations for accountability and support in times such as these.
- Seek assistance and guidance from other organisations with child protection policies where necessary.

#### Reporting process:

- Any concerns or allegations must be reported immediately (where practicable) or within 24 hours to the relevant Country Director.  
Country Directors  
E: [info@gwm.org.au](mailto:info@gwm.org.au)
- The person making the report must complete a confidential Incident Reporting Form (see attachment 2) following notification of the concern or allegation.
- The relevant Country Director or designated Board Member will review the incident report and determine the appropriate course of action.
- Where necessary refer the matter to the appropriate local authorities and/or if the allegation involves a foreigner inform the relevant Embassy where practicable.
- In consultation with the affected person(s) are to close out the allegation by developing and implementing an 'action plan' to address the incident in order to manage the risk and to prevent a reoccurrence.
- The Country Director or designated Board Member must maintain copies of all documentation, ensuring they are accurate and up-to-date; all files will be stored securely and confidentially.
- Where necessary communicate any outcomes from the incident to all personnel, for instance if the policy or Code of Conduct has been updated.

### **9. Use of children's images and stories**

GWM often uses children's photos, case studies and stories to promote our work. Any GWM personnel or representatives taking, using or storing photos of children or using any form of media communication must comply with the CPP and ensure that children are portrayed in a respectful, appropriate and consensual manner. Our guidelines on the use of children's images and stories, in line with the ACFID code of conduct 4.2 are:

- A child should always be portrayed 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.
- A child and its 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.
- There should be no identifying information of the child used in publication of images with their location.
- Local cultural traditions should be assessed regarding restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Images should be an honest representation of the context and the facts.
- When sending electronically, file labels should not reveal identifying information.

## **10. GWM Personnel**

GWM will screen all personnel, which will include National Offence History Checks and where practicable Working with Children Checks (Victoria), as well as undertake verbal referee reports. In addition, suitability for working with children and young people will be further assessed through the application process, and by undertaking interviews that include behaviour-based questions. If any issues are identified with potential volunteer or personnel, these are referred to the CEO who will determine if the person is suitable to be involved based on the information provided.

Employee contracts (for staff and volunteers) will include a clause that they must agree to the CPP and they can be dismissed, suspended, or transferred to other duties if they are under investigation, breach or are non-compliant with the child protection Code of Conduct.

All induction processes for personnel working with GWM will incorporate a briefing on child protection issues and the CPP. All personnel having contact or working with children will be provided with a copy of the CPP and must agree to abide by and sign the Code of Conduct. The signed copy will be kept on their personnel file.

GWM will incorporate annual refresher training for ongoing personnel on the CPP, including the incident reporting process and any other matters relevant to child protection practices. GWM is committed to providing updates to ongoing staff regarding any changes to the CPP or matters relevant to child protection practices in the field.

## **11. Involving children and young people**

GWM is committed to child and youth participation particularly in programs, projects and activities that directly involve children and young people. GWM seeks to provide opportunities to children and young people to voice their views and opinions about the program, projects and activities provided by GWM and also provide suggestions and feedback to inform future initiatives

## **12. Reviewing the Child Protection Policy**

The Child Protection Policy (CPP) will be reviewed every five years or earlier where necessary by the delegated GraceWorks Myanmar (GWM) Board Member with responsibility for the CPP. All other board members and relevant personnel will be consulted during this process. Next review date July 2023.

## **13. Definitions**

Child – For the purposes of this policy and as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child, a child or young person is considered to be a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Protection – Is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused, harmed or exploited.

### Child Abuse<sup>1</sup>

*Physical Abuse* – Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

*Emotional Abuse* – Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self-esteem. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

*Neglect* – Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter and supervision, to the extent that the child’s health and development are placed at risk.

*Sexual Abuse* – Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or someone bigger and/or older than the child uses power or authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Physical force is sometimes involved. Contact offences include touching and fondling through to sexual penetration. Non-contact offences include verbal sexual harassment, indecent exposure, ‘peeping’ and downloading or exposing children to pornography.

Child sex-tourism<sup>1</sup> – Child sex tourism is the sexual exploitation of children by a person or persons who travel from their home district, home geographical region, or home country in order to have sexual contact with children.

Child trafficking<sup>1</sup> – Any act which involves the illicit transportation of children from one place to another. International trafficking is defined by the crossing of international boundaries.

Children in emergencies – In disaster or emergency situations, children are especially vulnerable to abuse or exploitation particularly if they become part of a displaced and traumatised population.



**Attachment 2 – Incident Reporting Form**



**GraceWorks Myanmar  
Incident Reporting Form**

<b>Date of report</b>	
<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer/personnel involved:</b>	

***Please categorise the incident***

- Physical abuse
- Sexual offence
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Serious neglect
- Breach of Code of Conduct

<input type="checkbox"/>

***Please describe the incident***

<b>Description of incident (please state facts)</b>	
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<b>List any witnesses to the incident</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	
<b>Immediate action taken</b>	
<b>If no action taken – reason</b>	

<b>Name of person completing form &amp; position</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**GWM use:**

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Immediate action taken</b>	
<b>If no action taken – reason</b>	

<b>Name of GWM personnel completing form &amp; position</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Name of Board CPP Delegate</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	