

Child Protection Policy



Policy ID	POL-OPS-CPP	Version	1
Drafted by	Synergaid Pty Ltd	Approved by Board on	8/07/2025
Responsible person	Legal Department	Scheduled review date	7/07/2027

Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes Marked?

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

Aid Without Borders Ltd ("AWB") is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children it comes into contact with, regardless of gender, race, ethnic background, disability, nationality, religious belief, or socioeconomic status. As an international development organisation based in Melbourne, Australia, AWB recognises its legal, ethical, and moral responsibility to prevent child abuse and to protect children from people who may pose a risk to them.

This Child Protection Policy (CPP) sets out AWB's approach to protecting children from abuse and exploitation. It aligns with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Australian child protection laws. The policy serves as a practical guide for all personnel and associated individuals to:

- Demonstrate AWB's commitment to protect children from harm and abuse.
- Educate staff and others about child abuse and promote a child safe and a child friendly culture where everyone is committed to keeping children safe.
- Create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.
- Provide guidance on how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse. It provides guidance to staff and others on how to work respectfully and effectively with children. This will ensure all stakeholders, including staff and others are working in a safe environment.
- Fulfil AWB's obligations to have policies and procedures implemented which promote the safety and well-being of all children accessing its services and programs, in particular to minimise the risk of abuse to children.
- Fulfil AWB's obligations to adhere to local and international child protection criminal laws, which prohibits the abuse and exploitation of children. These include local laws where AWB's programs exist, and international laws and Conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour and child pornography.

This policy sends a clear message that child exploitation and abuse is not tolerated in AWB and attracts disciplinary and commercial sanctions, as well as criminal penalties under Australian domestic and extra-territorial laws.

1.2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all personnel and associated parties, including:

- All board members, employees (permanent, part-time, fixed-term, casual), volunteers, interns, and consultants.
- Partner organisations engaged by AWB through formal agreements.

- Visitors, media representatives, donors, and others with access to children in the context of AWB programs.

All Direct Personnel and Associates of AWB:

- Permanent, fixed-term and casual employees
- Individual contractors and consultants
- Volunteers, interns and work-experience students
- Board members
- Partner organisations under formal contract

All Indirect Personnel Engaged by AWB (People having contact with children for a period of one day or longer):

- Journalists and media personnel
- Photographers and videographers
- Donors and sponsors
- Guest presenters and entertainers
- Visitors (including family members of AWB staff)

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities

AWB seeks to involve appropriate personnel in all levels within the organisation including the board members and staff in the process of risk identification and establishment of practical strategies to ensure a firm approach to AWB's CPP.

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Directors / Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the policy and monitor compliance. • Receive and oversee high-level safeguarding reports.
Legal & Compliance Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead investigations into reported concerns. • Maintain confidential, secure reporting mechanisms. • Ensure alignment with relevant legislation and donor requirements.
Project Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and document child protection risk assessments during project design, delivery, and review. • Support partners to implement child-safe practices.
Finance Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor financial transactions related to child-focused programs to prevent misuse of funds.

People and Organisation Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage safe recruitment processes. • Deliver regular safeguarding training. • Act as the designated Child Protection Officer, coordinating incident response.
Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and enforce child-safe behaviour. • Support team members to understand and uphold policy requirements.
All Personnel and Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to this policy and associated code of conduct. • Immediately report concerns or breaches. • Act in the best interests of children at all times.

1.4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

AWB ensures that it complies with and implements all relevant International, Australian Commonwealth and state and territory laws to ensure the protection of children.

- **International**
 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
 - Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- **Federal Legislation**
 - Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
 - Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- **State Legislation:**
 - NSW: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
 - ACT: Children and Young Persons Act 1999
 - NT: Community Welfare Act
 - QLD: Child Protection Act 1999
 - SA: Children's Protection Act 1993
 - TAS: Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997
 - VIC: Children, Youth and Families Act 2005; Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
 - WA: Children and Community Services Act 2004

1.5. Definitions

The following terms are used in this policy document and are defined as follows:

- **Child Safeguards:** The preventative measures we can put in place in our workplace, in the contexts we work and with our partners to make sure children are safe from harm or minimise the risks.
- **Child Safe:** The results of the activities, initiatives and environments that have been designed to reduce opportunities of harm to children. Having safeguards in place enables a more child safe environment.
- **Child Rights:** The rights of children which are prescribed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Amongst a much broader range of other rights, the Convention outlines the rights of children which relate to child protection – that is for children to be protected from economic exploitation and harmful work, from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse and from physical or mental violence and from being separated from their family against their will.
- **Harm:** Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child or young persons physical, psychological or emotional well-being.
- **Exploitation:** The abuse of a child where some form of remuneration is involved or whereby the perpetrators benefit in some manner. This could involve the child in labour or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, development, and education. Exploitation includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution.
- **Abuse:** An act which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development.
- **Duty of Care:** A common-law concept requiring the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risks of injury.
- **Child and young person:** Any person under the age of 18 years, unless local laws recognise adulthood earlier.
- **Child Protection:** Actions to protect children from harm and the responsive actions we take if children have experienced harm. It's about prevention and response.
- **Child Abuse:** Harm to male and female children of all backgrounds, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, bullying, child labour and domestic violence. Perpetrators can be adults or peers, including professionals in positions of trust.
- **Physical abuse:** Deliberate injury or threat of injury—slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing—resulting in bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.
- **Neglect:** Persistent failure or deliberate denial of a child's basic needs—clean water, food, shelter, sanitation, supervision—placing health and development at risk.
- **Sexual abuse:** Use of a child for sexual gratification by an older or larger person, through contact or non-contact acts, threats or exposure to pornography, regardless of local age-of-consent laws.
- **Bullying:** Deliberate, repetitive misuse of power causing physical (hitting, kicking), verbal (insults, threats) or psychological harm (intimidation, ostracism).

- **Domestic violence:** Chronic domination, coercion, intimidation or victimisation of one person by another in intimate relationships—physical, sexual or emotional—witnessed or experienced by children.
- **Particularly vulnerable children:** Children at higher risk of abuse—those outside family environments, in institutions, at work, living on streets, or in conflict/emergency zones.
- **Children in emergencies:** Displaced or traumatised children in crisis situations who face heightened risks of abuse and exploitation.
- **Personnel:** All staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, partners and representatives of AWB

1.6. Using this Policy

- **Section 1** of this document explains the purpose and scope of this policy. This section also identifies the important legal regulations and recognised codes of conduct that was used in developing this policy. Significant roles and responsibilities all AWB personnel as well as definitions have also been described in this section.
- **Section 2** of this document explains the guiding principles used in the development of AWB's CPP. This section provides all necessary procedures that must be undertaken to ensure the effectively protect the rights and safety of children within AWB's programs. This section details the necessary reporting procedures in the case of breach of this policy.
- **ANNEX:** this section contain AWB's Child protection Code of Conduct, Use of Children's images and an initial incident reporting form respectively.

2. POLICY & PROCEDURES

2.1. Guiding Principles

AWB believes that any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The following statements guide AWB's CPP procedures:

- (a) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the universal foundation for child protection.
- (b) Fundamental principle of the Convention is that children have their own indivisible rights.
- (c) AWB's firm belief is that all children have a right to be safe at all times, have an obligation to provide safe and protective services and environments.
- (d) AWB recognizes its duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe from harm.
- (e) AWB's continuous effort and proactive steps to create child safe and child friendly programs.
- (f) Adherence to this CPP is a mandatory requirement for all staff and others.
- (g) Ensuring that all staff and relevant stakeholders are made aware of the CPP and their responsibilities.
- (h) All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are made based on the Best Interests of the Child Protection Principle. This principle refers to decisions considering that the child receives maximum
- (i) benefit possible from services provided, and that the positive impacts of any course of action outweigh any negative impacts.
- (j) Where possible, children will be consulted in the development of the CPP and the implementation of child safe practices.
- (k) Children in our programs to be given opportunities to express their views on matters affecting them.
- (l) AWB's firm belief is that all children should be equally protected and assisted regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, family background, economic status, physical or mental health or criminal background.

AWB's commitment to child protection is based on the following principles:

- (a) Promoting and protecting the best interests of children at all times
- (b) Zero-tolerance towards all forms of child abuse
- (c) Shared responsibility towards child protection in the organisation, including all personnel and associates, its partners and the communities in which it works
- (d) Including the views of children and young people to inform the child protection policy and program development.

2.2. Implementation Procedure of CPP and Code of Conduct

The Policy does not need to be signed by people engaged by AWB for less than one day, and/or who will have no contact with children. These people must be made aware of the Policy, AWB's child protection standards and be supervised by an AWB staff member at all times.

The Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct will be implemented through: –

- Read, understand and adhere to the Child Protection Implementation Guidelines – an Australian and International version of the Guidelines are available on the AWB Intranet. A hard copy is available in each office. The Guidelines provide procedures, practical tools and templates as well as detailed information to implement the Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Read, understand and adhere to AWB's Child Protection Code of Conduct (Annex A) all personnel, associates and representatives of AWB are required to sign the Policy and Code of Conduct (outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relation to children. A breach of the Code may result in termination of employment) agreeing to comply with the principles and standards they contain. All personnel are encouraged to discuss this Policy and Code of Conduct at the commencement of their employment/engagement with AWB if they have any questions or concerns. Personnel should contact the Legal & Compliance Department to do this.
- Reporting of alleged or suspected cases of child abuse – all personnel, associates and representatives of AWB must report any concerns they have for the safety or wellbeing of a child. Reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and as quickly as possible and will meet country, state or territory specific legislative requirements. Any person who intentionally makes a false allegation or malicious allegation will face disciplinary action.
- Read, understand and adhere to AWB's Child Protection Risk Management – effective child abuse prevention strategies will be incorporated in all AWB program designs, activities and emergency responses.
- Understand and implement AWB's Recruitment of personnel and associates management practices – prospective and current personnel will be screened and monitored to ensure the organisation does not employ, engage or retain people who pose an unacceptable risk to children.

2.3. Recruitment & Screening

Recruitment and screening of personnel and associates must reflect AWB's commitment to protect children by ensuring checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to be in contact with children and young people and attract the safest people who share AWB's values and commitment to protecting children.

This Policy commits AWB to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.

All employment contracts must contain provisions for dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties for any personnel who breaches the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct.

AWB has a robust recruitment and screening process for all personnel and associates, which are strictly implemented. These are:

- (a) Criminal history check prior to engagement

- (b) Child protection interview question
- (c) Two verbal reference checks – including question relating to the applicant’s general conduct. One reference must be from the person’s current or most recent employer
- (d) Sign the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct prior to engagement
- (e) Once engaged, attend a Child Protection Policy training session.

Additional procedures for those working with children or having access to child sensitive data include:

- (a) Targeted/behavioural based interview questions used to determine attitudes, motivations, and values in regards to children and young people and working with them.
- (b) Reference check to include questions regarding any concerns about candidate’s conduct when working or interacting with children and young people
- (c) These procedures must be evidenced by:
 - i. Documented criminal record checks for personnel and associates in contact with children
 - ii. Documented verbal referee checks
 - iii. Interview plans incorporating behavioural-based interview questions that are specific to positions that involve working with children
 - iv. Documented request for an applicant to disclose whether they have been charged with child exploitation offences and their response.

2.4. CPP Training Procedure

The following training plan must be implemented: -

- 1- All permanent, maximum term and casual staff and Board Members of AWB must attend a Child Protection Policy training session within six months from the commencement of their employment or appointment.
- 2- All permanent, maximum term, casual staff and Board Members of AWB should attend a refresher Child Protection Policy training session every two years.
- 3- All other personnel and associates of AWB must be provided with an induction on the Policy and Code of Conduct
- 4- International AWB Field Partners who do, or may, have direct contact with children are inducted with AWB’s CPP through inductions/workshops- which may be held either face-to-face or by Skype or phone conference - at which this Policy, its importance and consequences of non-compliance, will be presented to the Partner Organisation’s executive and relevant staff, volunteers and contractors.

2.5. Visits, Sponsorship & Donor Engagement

Notice of interest to visit children under an AWB Orphan Aid Program by a non-staff visitor must be given to AWB no less than 2 months prior to the intended visit date.

In order to ensure all reasonable precautions are taken to protect children, AWB will ensure compliance with all visit requirements prior to authorizing a non-staff visitor to visit a child.

These requirements will include the completion of all necessary forms requested by AWB as well as full identification details to enable us to compile a police background report. AWB recognises the need to implement specific guidelines to manage the child protection risks within its sponsorship programs. The following guidelines and procedures must be implemented and followed by all sponsors who take part in sponsorship programs which may involve contact with child/ren:

- (a) Letters which contain political or religious comments, which could cause offence or be inappropriate, are not permitted
- (b) All sponsors will receive clear child protection and behavioural guidelines upfront
- (c) All visits should be arranged in advance through our office and sponsors interviewed
- (d) Sponsors inform the agency at least 3 months in advance
- (e) Police checks are required for visiting sponsors and any accompanying family members
- (f) All visiting sponsors will sign the Child Protection Policy
- (g) Partner agency staff will be present at all times during the visit
- (h) Children should not be invited to leave or be taken away from their communities
- (i) Invitations to the sponsor's country are not allowed
- (j) Sponsors will be interviewed before each visit
- (k) All gifts and correspondence will be screened by the agency
- (l) Sponsors and sponsored families should not exchange mailing addresses during visits
- (m) After every visit a report will be sent to the head office
- (n) All visits will be monitored
- (o) Where sponsors go against policies the organisation can bring sponsorship to a close

AWB has the right to reject or cancel a non-staff visit if the information received is incomplete or insufficient or if the police background report contains information which may disqualify the visitor to visit a child.

Furthermore, non-staff visitors must respect the dress standards of other cultures and while visiting, must dress appropriately as to avoid offence. Jewellery or any other expensive possessions should not be worn or taken while visiting as to avoid damaging effects.

When a non-staff visitor arrives unannounced at one of our partner or field offices, he/she will not be granted the automatic right to visit a child/children and he/she will be deemed 'unauthorized'.

2.5.1. Guideline on Gifts

AWB understands that it can be a great feeling to give a child a gift of things they probably can never afford. As this may brighten the day of one child, it will bring sadness to all the others.

AWB does not authorize a non-staff visitor under any circumstances to give a gift of any sort directly to a child.

A non-staff visitor may alternatively like to contribute financially or in kind towards the field office or partner NGO who is caring for the child.

2.6. Child Protection Implementation Strategy and Reporting Procedures

The Child Protection Reporting Process must be followed when reporting a concern for the safety or wellbeing of a child or a breach of this Policy and/or Code of Conduct.

AWB will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly and the principles of natural justice will be a prime consideration.

Where required, an internal investigation will be conducted in regards to a report being made. In most cases the investigation will be conducted by the Legal & Compliance Department or the Directors.

Children and young people, parents/guardians and community members involved in AWB's programs or activities should be informed on how to raise a concern about their safety or wellbeing or that of another child. This can be done verbally or in written form. Personnel and associates must inform their Manager if they believe they or a member of their family may be at risk of harm for making or being part of making a child protection report.

2.6.1. Child Protection Internal Reporting Procedure

The following procedure should be followed for reports concerning an alleged breach of the Child Protection Policy and/or Code of Conduct, allegations or suspicions of child abuse having been committed, or concerns/information about the actions or behaviour of AWB, associates or representatives.

Who Can Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child or Young person • Parents/guardians/ Community members • Personnel, associates or Representatives of AWB
What to Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegations, suspicions, disclosures or observations of child abuse committed by personnel, (Annex 3) • associates or representatives of AWB or • Concerns about the action or behaviour of personnel, associates or representatives of AWB that has harmed or put a child at risk of harm or • Suspected or confirmed breaches of the CP Policy and/or Code of Conduct by personnel, associates or representatives of AWB or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information received of criminal proceedings being undertaken in regard to child exploitation and abuse against personnel, associates or representatives of AWB.
When to Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately or as soon as it is practically possible
Who to Report to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal & Compliance Department/Directors Child exploitation and abuse allegations, criminal proceedings undertaken or serious and/or repeated breaches of the Policy and Code immediately reported to the Legal & Compliance Department or Directors
What Will Happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of severity of the report by Legal & Compliance Department or Directors Directors will report child exploitation and abuse allegations and any criminal proceedings to AWB and DFAT as required All parties' safety needs must be assessed and responded to including the child/ young person/ family members/ person against whom the report is made/personnel and associates
Possible Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings to discuss breach and opportunity for person to provide their account/understanding of the situation Performance Management Further education on the CP Policy and Code of Conduct Formal warning and monitoring Transfer to other duties Suspension pending investigation Internal and/or criminal investigation Report to Police Dismissal
Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to be given where possible to those directly involved or affected, protecting confidentiality and privacy. Debriefing/counselling to be offered, if needed

2.6.2. Child Protection External Reporting Procedure

This Process should be followed for reports concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person involved in AWB programs or in the community.

Who Can Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child or Young person Parents/guardians/ Community members Personnel, associates or Representatives of AWB
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What to Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allegations, suspicions, disclosures or observations of child abuse committed by personnel, (Annex 3)
When to Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 24 hours or as soon as practically possible – if after hours and a child is at serious risk of harm, immediately report to the local child protection statutory authority or police.
Who to Report to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager/Directors
What Will Happen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting (team meeting) to discuss further action Directors contacted for further advice or to report a high risk/complex report
Possible Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report made to child protection statutory authority/government department Report made to community-based child protection committee or similar Report made to Police Referral made to local support/counselling organisation or service All parties' safety needs must be assessed and responded to – child/young person/family members/person against whom the report is made/personnel, and associates
Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to be given where possible to those directly involved or affected, protecting confidentiality and privacy. Debriefing/counselling to be offered, if needed

2.7. Measures Regarding Breach of Code of Conduct

The following measures will be applied in the case where any personnel, associate or representative breaches AWB's CPP and/or Code of Conduct:

- (a) Meeting to discuss breach and opportunity for person to provide their account/understanding of the situation
- (b) Performance management
- (c) Further education on the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
- (d) Formal warning and monitoring
- (e) Transfer to other duties
- (f) Suspension pending investigation
- (g) Internal investigation
- (h) Report to Police
- (i) Dismissal

These measures will apply alongside any criminal investigation, where relevant.

ANNEX 1: Child Protection Code of Conduct

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 an AWB representative and a positive role model to children. AWB has developed a child safe code of conduct to protect children, staff and the organisation by providing clear behavioural guidelines and expectations. AWB's child safe code of conduct includes:

I WILL:

- (a) Treat all children and young people in our program with respect.
- (b) Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent the values of AWB.
- (c) Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers.
- (d) Respect cultural differences.
- (e) 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.
- (f) Report any concerns of child abuse.
- (g) At all times staff should be transparent in their actions and whereabouts.
- (h) Take responsibility for ensuring they are accountable and do not place themselves in positions where there is a risk of allegations being made.
- (i) Self-assess their behaviours, actions, language and relationships with children.
- (j) Speak up when they observe concerning behaviours of colleagues.

I WILL NOT:

- (a) Engage in behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- (b) Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child or young person.
- (c) Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.
- (d) Take children to their own home/hotel or sleep in the same room or bed as a child.
- (e) Smack, hit or physically assault children.
- (f) Develop sexual relationships with children or relationships with children that may be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- (g) Behave provocatively or inappropriately with a child.
- (h) Participate in the treatment of children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- (i) Act in a way that shows unfair and differential treatment of children.
- (j) Photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians (medium (see also 'Use of children's images for work-related purposes' below)
- (k) Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way.
- (l) Seek to make contact and spend time with any child or young person outside the program times.

- (m) Use AWB's computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras inappropriately, nor use them for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children.

I, _____ (Full name as shown on photo ID) as undersigned below, have read and understood and hereby agree to abide by this Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____.

ANNEX 2: Use of Children's Images for Work-Related Purposes

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

- (a) Assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child,
- (b) Obtain consent from the child or a parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used
- (c) 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
- (d) Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- (e) 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.

I, _____ (Full name as shown on photo ID) as undersigned below, have read and understood and hereby agree to abide to the above statements.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____.

ANNEX 3: Incident Reporting Form

Name of reporting staff/volunteer/partner	
Name of Senior Staff member onsite	
Name of impacted child/ren or persons	
Date and Time of incident	
Time of report	
Location of Incident	
Description of incident	
Has this incident been reported to the Child Protection Officer?	<i>Name of CPO:</i> <i>Time reported:</i>
Other Notes:	
Signature of reporting staff/volunteer/partner:	<i>Date:</i>
Signature of senior staff/volunteer/partner:	<i>Date:</i>
Signature of Child Protection Officer	<i>Date:</i>