

Child Safeguarding & Protection (CSP) Guidelines

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1. Introduction

Tearfund's Child Safeguarding & Protection Guidelines (CSP) are intended to implement the Safeguarding Policy to ensure that children are protected and not harmed in any way as a result of their involvement in our work. The safeguarding of children will be assisted by increasing the awareness of Tearfund People around risks and issues and what to do if they encounter a concern.

These Guidelines are intended to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Guidelines which together guide Tearfund's approach to keeping people at risk safe from abuse, exploitation and harassment. These guidelines are informed by, and aligned with, National and State Child Safe Standards, and relevant safeguarding policies of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) as a funding partner.

Tearfund is aware that harm and abuse can happen:

- a. between an adult (being the abuser) and another adult/vulnerable adult;
- b. between an adult (being the abuser) and a child;
- c. between a child (being the abuser) and another child;
- d. between a child (being the abuser) and an adult/vulnerable adult.

These Guidelines equip Tearfund people to:

- a. be alert at all times to risks to children and run programs that are safe for children;
- b. feel able to talk openly about concerns;
- c. know when they must report;
- d. know how to report and what will happen when they do.

2. Safe People

Tearfund people should establish work and life practices that safeguard themselves and children. All Tearfund People (see definition) are required to sign the Tearfund Code of Conduct as part of their induction program and renew their commitment to the code according to the frequency set out in the Code.

Breaches of the Code will result in investigation by the Safeguarding Committee and be handled in accordance with the process outlined in section 5 of these guidelines – Responding and Reporting.

2.1 Accountability for Safe People Practices in all environments

Contact with children extends across physical and digital or online environments and includes all forms of contact including oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face contact. Tearfund people should take care to observe Tearfund's Code of Conduct through all channels of contact and increase accountability where possible. For example:

- One-on-one meetings with work experience students at the Tearfund office should be held in the open (or in glassed offices with the door open). Seek to be interruptible and visible.
- Contact with child supporters via the phone or email should include some form of accountability such as note taking on Tearfund's CRM, cc-ing your supervisor into emails or ensuring their parents have given permission and are aware of how Tearfund will interact with their child.

2.2 Recruitment of Tearfund People

Even if a role does not work directly or in sustained contact with children, the nature of Tearfund's work may present opportunities to gain contact with children through its programs, therefore it is essential to have robust personnel recruitment and selection practices. Tearfund's rigorous recruitment process highlights the safeguarding of children and helps identify if a person is unsuitable.

All Tearfund Australia staff, contractors and volunteers (including Board members) will be selected through processes which consider the level of contact with children and with vulnerable people, and includes:

- Answering safeguarding question(s) directly
- Referee checks which include specific safeguarding questions
- Appropriate criminal record checks for the relevant jurisdiction/s, (or statutory declarations or local legal equivalents where criminal record checks are unavailable or unreliable). This may be a Working with Children Check and/or other criminal history check.
- For some roles, information may be requested from previous employers as part of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.
- Reading and signing the Tearfund Code of Conduct (including a declaration of any allegation in relation to misconduct or safeguarding)
- Receiving a briefing on Tearfund Safeguarding policy and Guidelines
- Completing relevant Safeguarding training (e-learning, face-to-face briefing or other training).

For further detail regarding:

- Staff – see Recruitment Guidelines.
- Volunteers – see Volunteer Guidelines.
- Consultants/contractors - see the Procurement Policy & Guidelines.
- Travel – see International Travel Guidelines.

Recruitment and selection guidelines and procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated as required to ensure they reflect best practice safeguarding screening standards.

2.2.1 Responding to the disclosure of an incident or allegation during applicant checks

A disclosure may appear as a “disclosable outcome” on a criminal record check, or a disclosure may be made by a candidate or a referee during the recruitment process. All disclosures relating to safeguarding must be investigated. If a disclosure occurs, the People & Culture Director will provide advice to the relevant supervisor and CEO about appropriate steps to investigate and determine whether or not the individual can commence or continue with Tearfund based on their risk to children.

Risk will be assessed based on these factors:

- Relevance of the allegation or criminal conviction as a risk to children and vulnerable people. Any relevant conviction will likely render the individual unsuitable as a Tearfund person.
- Length of time elapsed since the conviction was recorded. If the conviction relates to children or vulnerable people, the length of time will likely be irrelevant, and the person will be considered unsuitable.
- Whether the individual advised Tearfund of the conviction prior to the check displaying the information. It is expected that the individual would openly disclose allegations, convictions or investigation findings prior to the results of the check being returned and this is a sign of transparency. If the conviction relates to children or vulnerable people, whether it was disclosed will likely be irrelevant and the person will be considered unsuitable.
- Potential risk mitigation and management actions

- Previous investigation, substantiation or non-substantiation and resolution of disclosed matters (i.e. findings of a Committee or Board or investigation report)
- Any other relevant factors i.e. guidance issued by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade around Criminal Record Checks and Screening.

Other relevant persons (such as a member of Tearfund's Board) may also be involved in the decision-making.

The confidentiality of disclosable outcomes will be preserved, and any records will be kept in line with required practice.

Tearfund reserves the right to refuse employment or terminate any person's employment if there is a reasonable belief that the person poses an unacceptable risk to the safety or wellbeing of children.

2.2.2 Due diligence renewals and record keeping

Due diligence checks will be regularly assessed for currency and renewed based on sector guidance and Alliance agreements (i.e. DFAT requirements). Appropriate records of all due diligence checks (current and past) will be stored securely in line with relevant legislation for up to seven years, depending on their expiration date.

2.3 Safeguarding Awareness and Training

Tearfund will publish the Safeguarding policy on its website, and Safeguarding training will form part of:

- Induction or orientation of new Tearfund staff, Board and relevant volunteers
- Briefing of all volunteers, consultants and any Tearfund person travelling to Tearfund projects or working in any context involving vulnerable people
- Regular training with all Tearfund staff.

Safeguarding Training will be complemented by other training modules such as Tearfund's Code of Conduct, Complaints, Whistleblowing and Gender Justice policy training.

2.4 Working with partners

As a key funding partner, DFAT stipulates that any activity delivered in a development, humanitarian or peacekeeping context is considered higher risk, regardless of the intended level of contact with children or people. This is because personnel may come into unsupervised or informal contact with children or people outside of formal work settings, and because local regulatory or accountability systems may be weak or disrupted, increasing the vulnerability of children. Therefore, all Partners working with Tearfund are expected to consistently apply good safeguarding practice in all activities, including participation in safeguarding awareness/training.

Tearfund Partners are also required to develop and have safeguarding policies (which may be combined with PSEAH policy) including child-friendly complaints policies and procedures adapted to their own local contexts in line with DFAT Safeguarding Comprehensive Standards. Otherwise, they must have appropriate Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures in place to safeguard children, which clearly meet DFAT Safeguarding Essential Standards while taking a phased implementation approach to gradually build capacity and comply with the Comprehensive Standards over a reasonable timeframe.

Tearfund commits to consultation and capacity strengthening with Tearfund's Partners to enhance their organisational approaches to Safeguarding, by prioritising the following:

- All levels of personnel in the Partner organisations clearly understand that Child Abuse in any form is unacceptable and that Tearfund has a zero-tolerance approach to inaction. Partner personnel are expected to complete essential training to understand what safeguarding is, its

importance in the humanitarian and development sector, and how to recognise, act and report safeguarding concerns.

- Safeguarding compliance is referenced in all Partnership agreements and equivalent documents including incorporating DFAT and other donor requirements. Any failure on the Partner's part to report or take action in regard to any incident or concern around SEAH will constitute grounds for review and possible termination of any Agreement with Tearfund.
- Tearfund's Partners possess a Safeguarding Children policy (or a combined Safeguarding policy) which includes appropriate and enforceable standards of conduct for all Board members, staff, contractors and volunteers or visitors to projects to sign, in line with DFAT Child Protection Comprehensive Standards. Otherwise, they have appropriate Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and vulnerable people, which clearly meet DFAT Child Protection Essential Standards while taking a phased implementation approach to gradually build capacity and comply with the Comprehensive Standards over a reasonable timeframe.
- Tearfund's Partners have effective risk management processes that include consideration of the risk of child abuse and document the controls already in place or to be implemented to prevent, reduce or remove risks as part of program design and throughout the life of the program.
- All primary stakeholders and the communities with whom Tearfund's Partners work know the appropriate and enforceable standards of conduct expected of Tearfund's Partners and their people.
- The communities where Tearfund's Partners work have an accessible, confidential, and culturally sensitive means of making a complaint of child abuse.
- Tearfund's Partners have incident reporting and good management systems that specify procedures for sensitive investigations.
- Due diligence and/or capacity assessments of Partners include an assessment of their implementation of key safeguarding and risk policies. Ideally implementation will include Partners appointing a suitable, trained safeguarding focal person who is responsible for taking and managing complaints and supporting program staff or volunteers in conducting risk assessments.
- Child protection is a standard item of discussion on project visits, as outlined in the Tearfund Partnership Manual. Every project cycle, Partnership Managers carry out an audit of partner safeguarding practices.

Where necessary, funds will be provided for the partner's organisational development in this area.

3. Safe Practices

3.1 Risk management

Risks to children need to be managed in all contexts, particularly including:

- Any situation where Tearfund introduces someone into a new context where they will have contact with children including, but not limited to:
 - exposure trip participants visiting communities;
 - Tearfund speakers or volunteers running simulation games in schools or at youth groups which are not their own context;
 - volunteers working at events where children may be present;
 - hiring a consultant to evaluate a project in a community, etc.
- Any situation where Tearfund has direct responsibility for children including:
 - events that have children's or youth programs;
 - exposure trips with youth participants;
 - work experience students volunteering in Tearfund's office, etc.
- Program work that has an impact on children. As most Tearfund projects work with and within communities, program work is therefore likely to have some impact on the

children within those communities.

Tearfund People work in a range of different contexts and jurisdictions, so each person will need to ensure that they are aware of the relevant legislation for their area, and the kinds of support available should something go wrong. For more information relevant to your region please refer to other agencies listed in Appendix A. Risk assessment where the activity is conducted within a church or school context should take into account the controls already in place and work with the entity around any residual risks.

Safeguarding is an integral part of risk management and project implementation. Promoting child-safe practices requires ongoing education and a shared understanding of child protection principles.

Planning for programs that will be run or funded by Tearfund need to consider and assess risk including physical risks, safeguarding risks, psychological and/or cultural risks, risk of discrimination, abuse, harm or adverse treatment based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation in the planning phase of programs, events or projects.

The [Event Safety Risk Assessment Template](#) covers examples of risks to children and suggested mitigation strategies, as well as actions leaders should follow if the risk is present during the event. Guidance on conducting risk assessments can be found throughout the template. For international programs, Tearfund's standard project proposal template requires completion of a Safeguarding Children Risk Assessment related to the project and the partner's working context.

3.2 Annual risk assessment

Tearfund Australia proactively assesses and manages Safeguarding risks in our programs through an annual Safeguarding Risk Assessment process, organised by the Safeguarding Officer with representatives from each Department. The identified risks are shared with the Executive Leadership Team and with actions to mitigate and continually improve safeguarding being implemented over the course of each year.

3.3 Communication and Use of Children's Images

To respect the dignity of children, all personal information and details of children, which may identify them or may increase the potential risk of harm or injury to their name or reputation or their families should not be used in Tearfund's public communications.

Images and text involving children will respect their dignity, integrity and strength. They will not be exploitative or be open to sexual interpretation. Dress will be modest and respect both the culture of the subject and the culture of the viewer. Illegal or unethical images of children are prohibited. Use of computers to view, download or digitally alter images of children for illegal or degrading purposes is forbidden under Tearfund's IT Policy and Code of Conduct.

The privacy of children will be respected and media gathering procedures will not allow children to be identified or contacted. Informed consent must be gained from parents/guardians and where appropriate, from children themselves as an additional measure of respect. An analysis of the risks to children due to access to and use or misuse of children's images and personal information when placed on online platforms will be undertaken (with the child and their family where feasible) prior to the publishing of any information/story. Further details are available in the Tearfund Australia Visual Images Policy and Guidelines section.

Communication with children participating in a Tearfund donation activity, event or program shall relate specifically to the event or program and wherever possible be reiterated or copied to the parents/caregivers of the child. If a parent/guardian is not reachable then another appropriate person should be copied into correspondence.

3.4 Involving Children and Young People

Tearfund is committed to ensuring children in contact with our work are provided with age-appropriate and easy to understand documents, in print or online, that are easily accessible and support children to:

- understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation;
- know how adults in the organisation should behave;
- understand the organisation's complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers;
- know about support services aimed at children.

Within Australia, we will ensure the Safeguarding policy is promoted to children participating in events, programs or services e.g. when children's programs are run at events, they should be made aware of their right to safety, rules for safe behaviour and avenues to seek help. This may be done via posters, showing video footage or providing parents information to share with their children.

Where appropriate, Tearfund will offer opportunities for children to express their views and participate in decisions that impact them.

Partners are encouraged to include the voices of children in their project design, planning and monitoring as appropriate. Tearfund will work with partners to help provide tools and facilitate partner initiatives in this area.

4. Safe Programs

4.1 Exposure trips

Tearfund recognises the need to implement specific guidelines to manage the safeguarding-children risks within its exposure trips. These guidelines include ensuring that:

- All volunteers/donors travelling to programs will receive safeguarding children training that includes clear behavioural guidelines.
- All volunteers/donors are to undertake activities in groups or pairs during their visit.
- All visits/trips/placements are to be arranged in advance through Tearfund Australia and volunteers/donors interviewed.
- Due diligence checks are required for volunteers/donors and any accompanying family members.
- Donors visiting the field and volunteers participating in exposure trips will be required to supply references.
- All volunteers/donors will abide by the Safeguarding Policy and sign the Tearfund Code of Conduct.
- Partner agency staff should be present at all times during the visit/program where there is contact with children.
- Children should not be invited to leave or be taken away from their communities.
- Invitations for children to visit the volunteers'/donors' country are not permitted. This is about preventing potential perpetrators from enticing vulnerable families or their children away from their community.
- Consistent with the Tearfund Code of Conduct, Tearfund People will not condone or participate in behaviour involving children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive (including the giving of gifts or provision of alcohol or drugs to children).
- The exchange of mailing addresses and contact details (including online forums) is not permitted at any time.
- After every trip the partner will be consulted for feedback.
- Volunteers/donors will not be permitted to stay with a child in their accommodation overnight (except with their own children) unless the child's parents are present. At all

times trip participants will be accommodated in pairs or small groups, and appropriate risk-management assessments undertaken with local-partner staff.

- Tearfund will not normally encourage or facilitate return visits to project communities by participants of exposure visits. Return visits to children or communities by exposure visit participants that lead to allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the authorities.

Good detailed advice on preparing short-term travellers can be found in ACC International Missions and Relief [Protecting Children in Short-Term Missions Manual](#). The staff member responsible for coordinating exposure trips should consult this manual or other relevant guidance as they prepare participants.

4.2 Events and quality children's programs

When running children's programs, there should be awareness of the limitations of children in a variety of age groups, and activities should be planned that are appropriate for the age and the level of support/supervision/assistance Tearfund can give for the activity. This includes considering allergies, food, access to toilets, signing in and out permissions, etc. Families should also have appropriate avenues to identify their individual needs such as tailored registration forms or information packs. When a need is identified, reasonable changes to the program should be considered and parents should receive communication on how their child will be supported to participate. ChildSafe has a wealth of templates to assist in planning a quality children's program.

Tearfund actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and supports them to enjoy their cultural rights. Therefore, consideration should also be given to creating a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued. This may include more than one of the following:

- Using inclusive language.
- Culturally appealing advertising.
- The display of appropriate flags at the event.
- Displays of artwork of a particular culture or variety of cultures.
- The inclusion of Welcome to Country or acknowledgement of Country in correspondence and introductions.
- The opportunity to participate in an activity in a way that honours or expresses culture.

Children involved in events that Tearfund runs should be provided with information about how to report any child-protection concerns or complaints using our [child-friendly Complaints Form](#) on the website, as well as how they can participate in decisions affecting them.

Information provided should be age-appropriate and easy to understand and access. Children should also be given information to help them understand their rights, how adults in the organisation should behave and about support services aimed at children. This may be done via posters, showing video footage or providing parents with information to share with their children.

Families should also be encouraged to participate in decisions that affect their child through the provision of information about how feedback and complaints are handled and how the organisation manages child safety risks and disciplinary actions.

Event organisers should use the Tearfund Event Planning Checklist on Monday.com to ensure they factor in all these considerations. The checklist covers

- sending invitations that include cultural and safeguarding statements,
- communication to parents of participants who are under 18 and ensuring event feedback is accessible to all participants including children.
- an MC brief introduction to safe behaviours, rights and expectations
- venue set up reminders such as setting up banners, event collateral, including

culturally appropriate, safeguarding & feedback posters where appropriate

4.3 Working in Emergency Contexts

During major humanitarian disasters, Tearfund works through agencies that work according to Core Humanitarian Standards. These include specific key actions and organisational responsibilities around safeguarding. Tearfund has specific procedures in place that guide our communications work on emergency situations and that aim to protect the increased vulnerability of children in these settings (see Tearfund Visual Images Policy for more information).

5. Responding and Reporting

5.1 Responding to a report by a child

Upon receiving allegations of, or information about, possible child abuse, Tearfund people should respond and provide necessary help, using a trauma-informed approach to create physical, psychological and emotional safety.

If a child makes a disclosure then the person receiving it should:

- Listen to what they are saying and be sensitive to their needs.
- Affirm that they were right to tell.
- Explain that the information will be acted on and kept as confidential as possible but it will not be “kept a secret”.
- Act immediately by reporting to the Safeguarding Children Officer.
- Act immediately to protect them. This may involve moving the child away from the immediate situation, finding out who the child’s carers are and taking the child to them if that is appropriate. Otherwise, find an appropriate person who can take temporary care of the child while you take reporting action and obtain advice on next steps.
- Avoid pressuring the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. The receiver’s role is to listen to what the child/young person wants to say and not to conduct an investigation (beware of asking leading questions as this may prejudice any subsequent investigation).
- Write everything down.

It is possible that a complaint or disclosure may be made by a former victim of child abuse who is now an adult. These complaints should be handled using the PSEAH Guidelines as appropriate (taking the maturity of the complainant into account).

5.2 Confidentiality

Reports made under this Policy will be treated confidentially. All information from reports and investigations will be carefully documented and stored securely by the Safeguarding Officer. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with the SC and will be handled in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

The names of people involved and the details of the report will remain confidential. Information will only be released on a “need to know” basis or when required by Australian or overseas law or when a report to police or child protection authorities is made.

Safeguarding reports are managed by Tearfund’s Safeguarding Committee and recorded on a Safeguarding Incident Register, which is reviewed by the ELT and Board quarterly. Registers contain suitably de-identified information in line with a survivor-centred approach.

Unauthorised disclosure of information relating to such a matter (i.e. outside of necessary disclosure foreshadowed by 5.2 and 5.3) will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5.3 Reporting to authorities

While Tearfund would prefer to be able to work proactively with relevant authorities, Tearfund recognises at all times the right of an individual to go directly to the authorities with their concern.

Where Tearfund is contacting authorities, care should be taken to ensure that Reportable Conduct Schemes for the relevant Australian state/territory are observed. Reportable Conduct schemes are an additional protocol and DO NOT replace the need to contact other authorities where circumstances require a response i.e. Police, other emergency services, child protection services. Further information on authorities and mandatory reporting within Australia can be found on the [Australian Institute for Family Studies](#) website.

5.4 How to report

If you are reporting a child safeguarding concern or incident, report in as much detail as possible. Please provide information about

- the child
- the child's parent
- the Incident or cause for concern
- additional reports made – who else has this been reported to?
- the suspected perpetrator/person(s) involved
- care for the child

5.5 Who is the report made to?

Tearfund offers a range of reporting options to ensure that the seriousness of incidents or concerns can be managed appropriately as outlined below. Report a concern or incident verbally or in writing to any of the following:

- The Safeguarding Officer
 - **Online via Tearfund's website:** using [Tearfund's Safeguarding Reporting Form](#)
 - **By Phone:** ask for the Tearfund Safeguarding Officer on (+61 3) 9264 7000 or free call 1800 244 986
 - **By Post:** address to the Safeguarding Officer at PO Box 164, Blackburn, VIC 3130 and mark "*Strictly Confidential*".
 - **By Email:** using safeguarding@tearfund.org.au
- Your Tearfund Supervisor or a member of the Tearfund Executive Leadership Team
- A member of the Safeguarding Committee—which comprises the Safeguarding Officer, Tearfund CEO, International Program Director or People & Culture Director
- In situations where the CEO is the subject of a report or is the complaining party, the report should be made directly to the Chair of the Tearfund Australia Board (email chair@tearfund.org.au)
- A person wishing to report an alleged breach of the ACIFD Code of Conduct may also inform the ACIFD Code of Conduct Committee. Reports should be marked 'confidential', addressed to: the Chair, ACIFD Code of Conduct Committee and emailed to code@acfid.asn.au.

Allegations involving someone associated with a Tearfund Australia Partner

Report a concern or incident to any of the following:

- Tearfund's Safeguarding Officer (see details above)
- The relevant Tearfund International Partnership Manager/Regional Team Leader (who will forward it on to the International Program Director and host agency supervisor/project manager).

- The International Program Director— jpd@tearfund.org.au Tearfund will require the Partner to initiate an investigation in line with their PSEAH or Safeguarding policy. Tearfund expects the Partner to share investigation findings with Tearfund.

5.6 When should a report be made?

A concern must be reported immediately (within 24 hours), including outside of business hours if required.

IMPORTANT - If you are receiving a report:

Where DFAT is a funding partner (i.e. Tearfund receives funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), the Safeguarding Officer should immediately notify DFAT via childprotection@dfat.gov.au preferably using their [Child Incident Notification Form](#) (within 24 hours of receiving the report).

5.7 Managing Reports from Different Contexts

Flowcharts for responding to a safeguarding report or concern are available in Appendix B. Safeguarding concerns are managed across 3 categories:

Category 1 - Relates directly to a Tearfund Person or program in Australia, or a Tearfund Person whilst overseas working for Tearfund – Tearfund has a duty of care and will respond by initiating an investigation and complying with all mandatory reporting requirements.

Category 2 - Relates to a person engaged by a Tearfund Partner or a Tearfund Partner program. Tearfund will:

- require the Partner to initiate an investigation in line with their Safeguarding Policy.
- monitor and support the Partner (activating the Tearfund Safeguarding Committee), and
- expect the Partner to share findings and reports with Tearfund.

The Safeguarding Committee will facilitate contact between the relevant Tearfund Family member who is impacted by this decision and the complainant where possible and relevant. If a partnership is restricted, suspended or terminated due to Safeguarding wrongdoing then the CEO will notify relevant Tearfund Family members as agreed in TFF Reputational Standard 5.

Category 3 - Relates to abuse in a community in which a Tearfund Partner is working. While Tearfund or the Partner may not have a formal responsibility to investigate, Tearfund or the Partner may have some influence in the community and may pass on information to the relevant local authorities. In each case an assessment should be made of what is in the best interest of the child at risk in relation to reporting the allegation to the authorities.

5.7.1 In Australia

If a Safeguarding concern occurs within Australia (category 1), it should immediately be reported to the person responsible for the Australia-based event and to Tearfund's Safeguarding Officer, CEO or Department Director.

5.7.2 Church/school context (not a Tearfund-run activity)

Much of Tearfund's church engagement work is not at events that are run by Tearfund but rather in a church or school context. In these situations, any concern (if the allegation is not against a Tearfund person) is best dealt with by the church/school as it occurred in their event and their context. Tearfund staff should report the concern to the pastor or person in charge and it should only go through Tearfund's processes if the person in charge fails to act responsibly on the matter. Tearfund staff should report the concern to their Tearfund Department Director and Tearfund should follow up with the church or school to provide support and ensure action was taken. These situations are difficult for everyone involved and too many agencies taking action could add unnecessary difficulties. It is a big step for an abused young person to make a disclosure and the resulting enquiries can be quite distressing. Tearfund should ensure that the matter is dealt with—but only one agency needs to follow it through.

5.7.3 Partner agency context

If the partner is dealing with a suspected or alleged safeguarding concern (category 2), Tearfund will monitor, support the partner and make sure they are dealing with it in an appropriate manner which includes activating Tearfund's Safeguarding Committee.

5.7.4 General community

Where inappropriate or abusive behaviour is observed in an international context, but not related to Tearfund's partner staff (category 3), it should be challenged where possible and appropriately reported/referred. Consultation with the relevant partner on a locally and contextually appropriate solution is essential.

5.8 Triage and Responding to reports

A triage system for escalating serious incidents including child protection and SEAH will operate, with the Safeguarding committee meeting to determine the level of seriousness and timing of Board and any other relevant notifications (see flowcharts in Appendix B).

All reports will be viewed as being made in the best interests of the alleged victim-survivor regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. Tearfund will ensure that the interests of anyone reporting genuine concerns in good faith are protected as far as practicable.

The Safeguarding Committee will act with suitable urgency having regard to the context, seriousness and type of report, taking time-bound reporting requirements of governing bodies into consideration.

Responses may involve one or more of the following actions:

- **Conducting a risk assessment**—to determine whether there are any immediate safety risks or concerns, current or potential risks to the complainant and any stakeholders involved in the case—and responding to support the safety of the child and their immediate needs;
- **Gathering more information**, such as interviewing the person/persons who made the allegations and/or other witnesses to make a decision about the allegation.
- **Assessing whether Tearfund or the Tearfund Partner has the relevant expertise and capacity to manage the case.** If this expertise is not available in-house, immediate assistance, through external capacity will be sought, if necessary, for investigation and support.
- **Raising concerns with the host agency**, through the relevant department, and monitoring the handling of the case, where the complaint concerns people connected to a Partner organisation. This task will be handled directly by the SC.
- **Reporting a criminal offence:** Where there is **any suspected, alleged or known incidents** of a criminal offence, the matter will be reported to the appropriate law

enforcement agency (including local child protection authority – see para 5.3). When working with international partners, reporting should consider risks to those who have been affected in contexts where this is relevant. Once a referral has been made to a law enforcement agency, any further action by Tearfund will be guided by the law enforcement agency.

- **Reporting to relevant bodies** such as funding and/or statutory bodies. Should an instance occur that may have such significant risk to the affected individual or the organisation, this will be directly reported to the Tearfund Board at the earliest possible opportunity and outside the normal reporting timelines.
- **Providing support**, as possible, to all stakeholders especially the child and including the reporter, as necessary. This may include medical, psychosocial and/or security assistance if appropriate. Special consideration should be given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety, cultural safety for culturally and/or linguistically diverse people/communities, and the safety of children with a disability;
 - It is recognised that children may also be perpetrators of sexual abuse or problem sexual behaviour. These situations require extra care because both safeguarding the perpetrator and the victim/survivor need to be considered. To the extent that Tearfund is able, and it is appropriate to do so, Tearfund will make efforts to support child perpetrators as well as victims/survivors.
- **Handling the concern internally** if it is not a criminal matter. Standing down (with pay, if relevant) Tearfund People against whom a complaint has been made, or assigning them other duties, until the case has been completed. Any Tearfund People stood down or temporarily re-assigned will be entitled to a fair and transparent process and will be offered appropriate support.
- **Recommending that no further action be taken, based on investigation findings.**

5.9 Disciplinary action

Disciplinary action will be taken against any Tearfund Person found to:

- Have failed to report a child protection concern;
- Have breached the Safeguarding Policy or Guidelines and/or Code of Conduct (minor breaches may result in action such as refresher training or increased supervision).

Disciplinary action may include the following sanctions:

- Tearfund People – suspension or standing down from role; formal warning; requirement to complete training or remedial coaching; dismissal; or termination of employment contract or volunteer role.
- Tearfund Partner agencies – remedial steps such as policy development, risk mitigation, training and accountability measures may be required as a condition of further funding or partnership continuation. Where the Safeguarding Committee resolves that people continue to be at risk in or from the work of Partner agencies and the Partner does not take sufficient steps to reduce these risks, Partnership with that agency may be terminated.
- Where relevant – reporting to authorities.

6. Concluding the case

All decisions made resulting from the case should be documented clearly and confidentially.

The Safeguarding Committee will consider lessons learned from each safeguarding case that may help prevent or manage future safeguarding cases. When identified, these lessons will be shared as appropriate with the ELT and/or the Board.

7. Definitions

Abuse: physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as neglect, bullying, child labour and family violence. Abuse can be inflicted on a child by both men and women, as well as by young people themselves. In some cases, professionals and other trusted adults also abuse children. Child abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientations, religious beliefs and political persuasions.

CEO: Chief Executive Officer of Tearfund Australia.

Child: A Child is anyone under the age of 18.

Child exploitation refers to one or more of the following actions:

- committing or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of abuse against a child
- possessing, controlling, producing, distributing, obtaining or transmitting child exploitation material
- committing an act of grooming, including online grooming
- using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, trafficking, forced labour, or any other personal or financial advantage.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, and online or digital abuse. It also includes a child or children witnessing such abuse against another child or adult.

Child Safeguarding: Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children including to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds.

Cultural Safety - 'the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than 'cultural awareness' and 'cultural sensitivity'. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves'.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been defined as 'the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture... their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the carer... (who) respects their culture and therefore encourages their sense of self and identity'.

Duty of Care: refers to the responsibility of the organisation to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risks of injury.

Emotional Abuse: causing children to feel frightened and in danger; to be exploited or corrupted; to feel worthless, unloved or inadequate.

Exploitation: commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others in a way that is to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral and social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

Harm: refers to any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation whether intended or unintended.

Neglect: a persistent, deliberate failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, resulting in impairment of the child's health or development. Allowing children

younger than 14 years of age to work, to the detriment of their education and normal development.

Physical Abuse: occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, threatening these actions, or wilful failure to prevent such events.

Safeguarding Concern: any suspected, alleged or witnessed incident of abuse or breach of Tearfund's Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding Officer (SO): The SO is responsible for the implementation of this policy across the organisation, and is an advice point for the organisation who assists the Executive Leadership Team in the implementation of this policy. They are also a key person in reporting and responding to suspected abuse. This role is held by People & Culture personnel, and the Chief Executive Officer of Tearfund.

Safeguarding Committee (SC): Tearfund will appoint a Safeguarding Committee, which will consist of a Safeguarding Officer, Tearfund CEO, and either the International Program Director or People and Culture Director (depending upon the nature of the safeguarding issue under consideration), and must include both female and male committee members.

The Safeguarding Committee will brief and update the Board on category 1 (Australian) and category 2 (international partner) investigations. The Safeguarding Officer will be the focal point for receiving any safeguarding reports and ensuring the Committee then meets. The Committee will manage the investigation process when an incident report or concern is received. It can draw on any other expertise from the Board or other experts as the members see fit and is empowered to appoint a case investigator to manage any investigation.

Sexual Abuse: forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This includes rape, incest, pornography, prostitution and also the inducement or coercion of children for any sexual behaviour.

Tearfund: In this document 'Tearfund', 'the organisation', 'we', 'us' or 'our' means Tearfund Australia.

Tearfund People: refers to all Tearfund staff, volunteers, (including Board members), exposure visit participants, and any contractors or consultants having contact with children or vulnerable people in the course of their work with Tearfund.

Victim-survivor: Child victim-survivor is a term used to describe a person under the age of 18 who is, or has been, abused, exploited or harmed. 'Victim-survivor' acknowledges both the harm suffered (victim) and the resilience or agency of the child in coping with the aftermath (survivor). This term emphasises a supportive, rights-based approach to addressing their needs and upholding their dignity throughout the reporting and response process.

8. Related References:

Tearfund policies	External policies and documents
• Bullying and Harassment Policy • Code of Conduct • Discipline Policy • Event Risk Assessment Template • Gender Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Guidelines • Safeguarding & Child Protection Guidelines • Recruitment Policy and Guidelines	• CHS PSEA Handbook • Victorian Child Safe Standards • ChildSafe Child Safety Resources & Training • ACFID Code of Conduct • Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

• Safeguarding and SEAH Reporting Form, and Child-friendly Safeguarding Form • Volunteer Policy and Guidelines	• Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Child and Adult Safeguards Implementation Handbook for partners
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Appendix A – Regional information

Here are some other agencies that provide resources you can access:

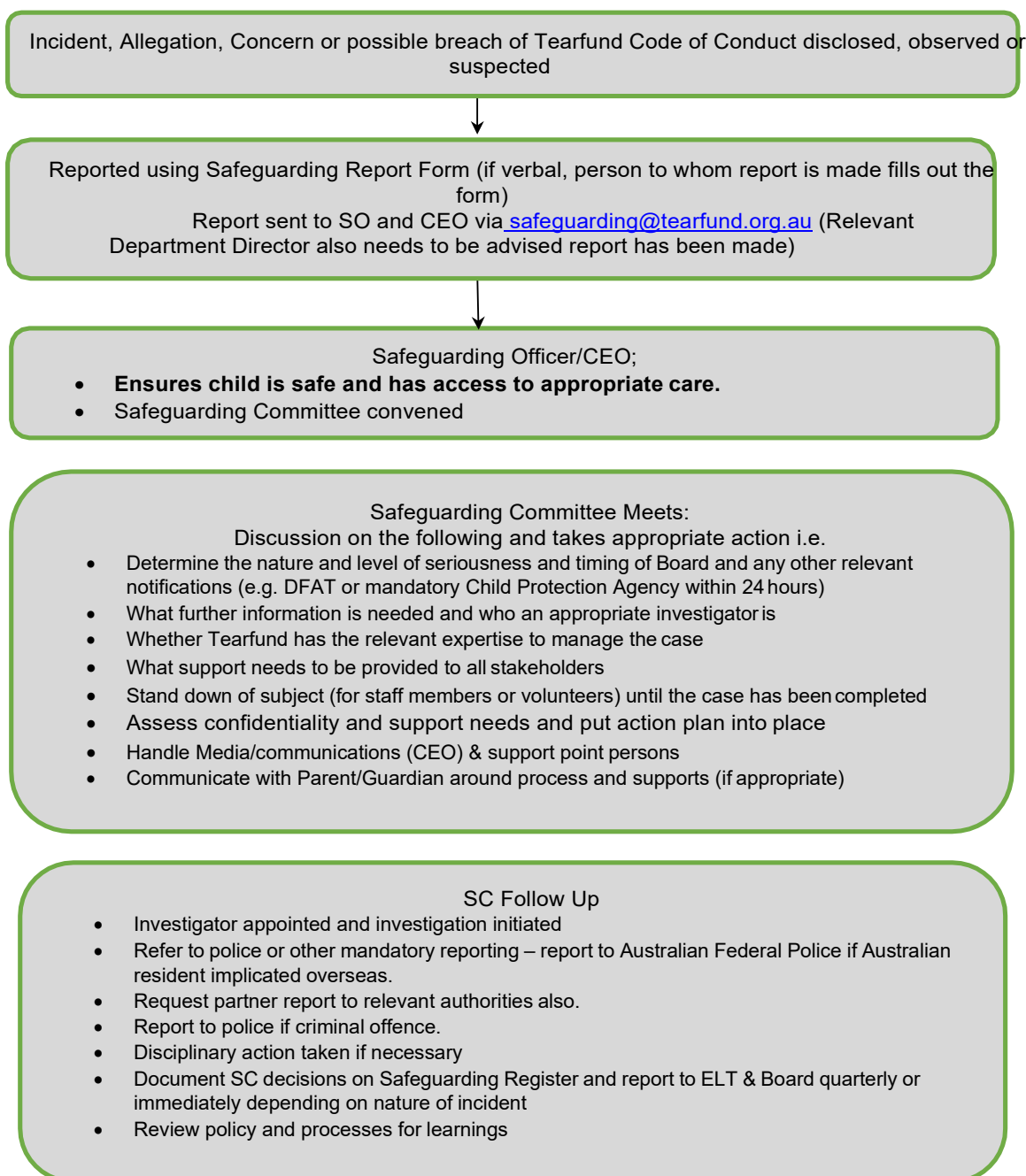
Region	Where to find more information
International	DFAT http://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/child-protection/Pages/child-protection.aspx
National	Child Wise https://www.childwise.org.au/
ACT	ACT Govt Community Services – Children Youth & Families http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs
NSW	NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations
Qld	Queensland Government Blue Card Services https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/risk-management.html
SA	SA Department for Child Protection https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/
Tas	Dept of Health and Human Services – Children & Youth Services http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services
Vic	Commission for Children and Young People http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/
WA	Government of Western Australia Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/
NT	NT Office Of The Children’s Commissioner https://occ.nt.gov.au/

Appendix B – Flowcharts for responding to a safeguarding report or concern

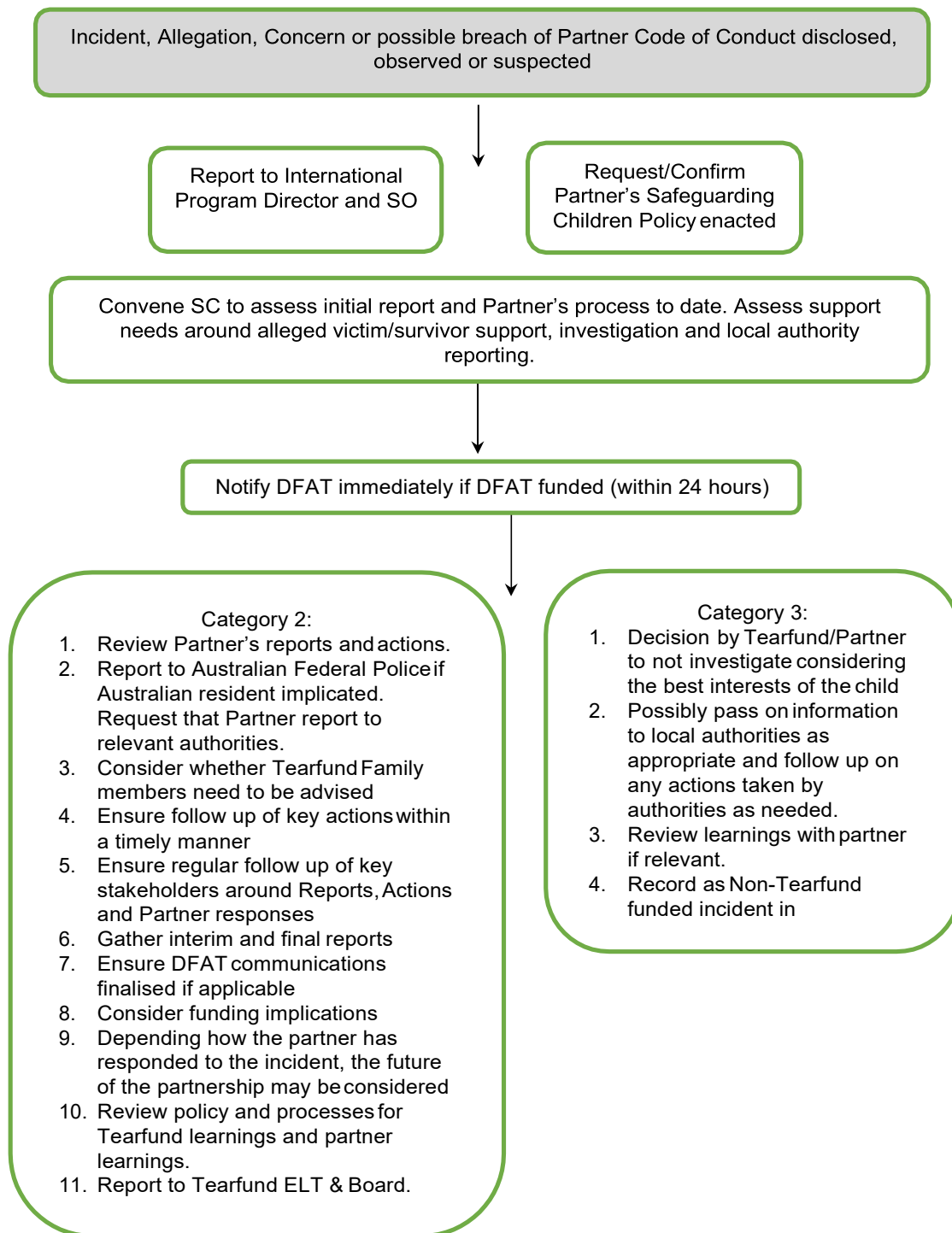
See section 5.7 Managing Reports from Different Contexts for definitions of the different Report Categories

Category 1 Report:

Australian incident process or incident involving a Tearfund Person



Category 2 and 3 Reports:
International incident process (partner agency or community context)



Note – Tearfund may monitor Partner incidents and processes that do not involve Tearfund people or projects as part of wider Partner assessment.