



Policy 201910110childprotection/policy/proceedures

## **BCF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bali Children Foundation (BCF) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at or for BCF is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within BCF.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within BCF.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

### **POLICY**

BCF is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

BCF has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at BCF is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the BCF, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, volunteers and members of the BCF community.

BCF will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

BCF supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. BCF is committed to the cultural safety of Balinese children, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The BCF Board has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.

The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures guidelines for working with children are in place.

The BCF CEO is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety Guidelines;
- Ensuring that all adults within the BCF community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct and Child Safety Guidelines;
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All managers and trainers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees and teaching staff about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management and trainers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and BCF's policy, procedures and Child Safety Guidelines in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL**

BCF undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share BCF's values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from working at BCF if they pose a risk to children.

BCF requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with BCF.

BCF will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

BCF will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

## **REPORTING**

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate authorities. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the CEO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

## **INVESTIGATING**

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the CEO will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the CEO may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice. The CEO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the CEO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

## **RESPONDING**

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies, Child Safety Guidelines or its Code of

Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies, Child Safety Guidelines or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

### **PRIVACY**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. BCF will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Child** means a person below the age of 18 years.

#### **Child abuse means**

- **Physical abuse** — the use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.
- **Neglect** — the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.
- **Emotional Abuse** — refers to a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child, or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem or social competence.
- **Sexual abuse** — the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours can include fondling genitals; masturbation; oral sex; vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object; fondling breasts; voyeurism; exhibitionism; and exposing the child to, or involving the child in, pornography
- **ill-treatment** — disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate or improper manner; making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and / or a pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate degrading comments or behaviour towards a child.
- **Grooming** – grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming behaviour is where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

**Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) the child is in need of protection,
- (b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury,” or
- (c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- a) a child states that they have been abused;
- b) a child states that they know someone who has been abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been abused;
- d) professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been abused.

## **REVIEWING**

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation’s child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation’s care.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Guidelines