

**UNICEF AUSTRALIA
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
JULY 2006**

Policy Statement

This policy statement formally expresses UA's absolute and fundamental belief in and commitment to the principle contained in Article 19 of the UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child that all children, wherever they may live and whatever may be their circumstances, have the right to be protected, nurtured and to be free from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation.

This principle provides us with our reason for being and underpins everything we do.

Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to –

- affirm that all children in all circumstances have the right to feel and to be safe and to live free from harm, exploitation and abuse;
- ensure that all people associated with UA, including its Directors, staff, volunteers, partners and agents ("representatives"), understand and share our commitment to this principle;
- ensure that UA has procedures in place which will protect both the children with whom its representatives may come into contact from any adverse consequences of that contact and the representatives themselves from being placed in a vulnerable position as a consequence of that contact;
- clearly express the actions UA will take in the case of any breach of this policy and the consequences of such breach.

Child Abuse

In this policy statement, the term "abuse" is used for ease of expression and has the same meaning as is given to it in the UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child and includes all the things that, in Australia, Child Wise has included in its definition of this term (see attachment).

Policy Implementation

UA implements this policy statement in the following ways –

1. Information Kept In UA's Database and Opportunities For Contact With Children

UA does not keep any details about children in its database as such details are irrelevant to its operations.

Except in the very limited circumstances indicated below, UA does not know and does not need or seek to know any personal details about the children who are helped by or otherwise benefit from UNICEF's programs.

Except in the particular circumstances indicated below, UA staff and volunteers have neither the need nor opportunity for direct contact with children.

2. Child Related Employment

The Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 (NSW) (CPPE Act) defines “child related employment” as *“any employment of the following kind that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised – (a).....(q)”*.

The CPPE Act requires employers to determine whether the duties of any positions within their organisations, whether paid or unpaid, come within the definition of “child related employment” and if so, places certain obligations on them in relation to employing or offering employment to persons in such positions.

UA does not presently have on its establishment any positions the duties of which involve “child related employment”.

Whenever a new position is established or the duties of an existing position are changed, the Chief Executive determines whether or not the position involves “child related employment”. In doing so, the Chief Executive may seek legal or other advice (for example, from the NSW Commission For Children and Young People). If the Chief Executive determines that the position involves “child related employment”, UA will act in accordance with the obligations placed upon it by the CPPE Act, including the undertaking of mandatory employment screening checks.

3. Employing Staff and Engaging Volunteers

A copy of this policy statement is given to applicants for employment when they respond to job advertisements and to volunteers when they complete the Volunteer Details Form.

Given UA’s special position as UNICEF’s Australian National Committee, all applicants for employment and volunteers are asked to complete a Declaration under the CPPE Act. In addition, all applicants for employment are asked to indicate on the application for employment form whether or not they are willing to apply for a National Criminal History Record Check if they are selected for employment. All pre-existing staff have been asked to do likewise.

UA’s standard offer of employment letter and Volunteer Details Form contain reference to this policy and acceptance of its provisions forms part of the acceptance of the terms and conditions of employment or volunteer engagement.

4. UA Directors

UA’s Board has approved and adopted this policy statement for incorporation into the Policies & Procedures Manual.

In doing so, they have acknowledged and accepted its application to themselves.

New Directors are provided with a copy of this statement and reference to it and its application to them is contained in the Consent To Act As Director form all Directors are required to complete prior to taking up their position.

UA's Directors have also been asked to apply for a National Criminal History Record Check and provide a copy of the National Police Certificate to the Chief Executive.

5. UA Celebrity Ambassadors and other Representatives

A copy of this policy statement is given to potential Celebrity Ambassadors and other representatives as part of the information given to them about UA when they are invited to accept appointment.

The provisions of this policy and adherence to them forms part of the contractual arrangements between UA and its representatives.

6. Contact With Children During Field Visits Or Other Events

Some UA representatives, as part of their duties, will from time to time come into contact with children.

When this occurs, strict protocols apply to ensure that such contact is never unsupervised and that the children concerned do not feel threatened or intimidated and the representative is not placed in a vulnerable position.

Field visits are always undertaken under the direction and control of the relevant UNICEF Country or Field Office and the UA representative(s) undertaking such visits are at all times accompanied by and under the management of UNICEF and/or project staff.

In other cases, for example visits to schools, the same protocols apply to ensure that there is no unsupervised contact with children. In these cases, UA's representative(s) are at all times accompanied by and under the management of the school's or organisation's staff.

7. Child Protection Officer

UA has appointed a nominated Child Protection Officer, presently the Administration & Compliance Manager, to whom any actual or suspected incidents of child abuse must be reported.

The Child Protection Officer must cause all such incidents to be fully investigated, either directly or by reporting the matter to the Police.

If the incident occurred overseas, it must be reported to the relevant UNICEF office which will act on such report in accordance with UNICEF's established guidelines. UA's Child Protection Officer must also be advised as soon as possible and will liaise with the relevant UNICEF office in relation to the investigation of the report. If appropriate, UA's Child Protection Officer will also report the matter to Australian authorities.

8. Breach Of This Policy

UA will fully investigate any actual or suspected breach of this policy by any of its representatives and, where grounds are found to exist, will report the matter to the relevant authorities for possible criminal proceedings being taken against the offender.

In the case of employees, such action may constitute “gross misconduct” under the terms of their employment contract and may result in the immediate termination of their employment.

In the case of other representatives, such action may constitute breach of contract and UA reserves its rights to take whatever action may be open to it at law.
