

CHILD SAFETY POLICY [GOV02]

Statement

ACOLA is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. While ACOLA does not deliver programs or services that involve direct or regular contact with children, ACOLA recognises that children may be present at public events, may be connected to ACOLA's stakeholders or partners, or may be affected indirectly by ACOLA's activities and funded work.

This Policy affirms ACOLA's zero tolerance of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation in any form connected with its activities, and its commitment to ensuring that ACOLA's resources, platforms, and partnerships are never used in a way that facilitates harm to children.

ACOLA has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This Policy has been informed by ACNC Governance Standards 1 and 5, and should be read in conjunction with the following Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy [GOV03]
- Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure [GOV04]
- Code of Conduct [HR01]
- Privacy Policy [GOV05]
- Whistleblower Policy [GOV06].

Scope

This Policy applies to ACOLA Board members, committee members, employees, volunteers, expert/reference group and steering committee members, contractors, and all individuals participating in ACOLA business and activities, both at ACOLA premises and at any other location.

This Policy applies to conduct that occurs in connection with ACOLA and its activities whether it occurs during work-related activities and events, outside the workplace or working hours, or via social media, email, or other manner of interaction.

Definitions

Child means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means any act or omission that causes harm to a child, including physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse, financial exploitation, or neglect.

Child safety concern means any concern, allegation, or report that a child has been, or is at risk of being, subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation in connection with ACOLA's activities, personnel, events, online platforms, or funded partners.

Child Safety Contact means the person designated by ACOLA to receive child safety concerns under this Policy.

National Principles means the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, endorsed by the Commonwealth and all States and Territories.

Risk Profile

ACOLA does not deliver programs or services that involve direct or regular contact with children.

ACOLA's risk of child safety incidents is therefore assessed as low. However, ACOLA acknowledges the following areas of residual risk:

- children may be present at ACOLA events open to the public or to member organisations,
- ACOLA communicates via online platforms and social media that may be accessible to children, and
- ACOLA may provide funding or support to partner organisations that work with children.

This Policy establishes proportionate controls for each of these risk areas.

Expectations

All individuals involved with or representing ACOLA in any capacity are expected to:

- treat all children with dignity and respect in any interaction connected with ACOLA,
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children at all times,
- refrain from conduct that could constitute child abuse, grooming, harassment or exploitation,
- not photograph, film, or record children in connection with ACOLA activities without the prior written consent of a parent or guardian,
- not engage in private social media, messaging or online communication with children in connection with ACOLA's work; any necessary contact with young audiences must occur through official ACOLA channels,
- disclose to the CEO any role they hold in another organisation that involves working with children, and notify ACOLA immediately if they become subject to a child safety investigation, suspension or Working with Children Check bar in any jurisdiction, and
- report any child safety concern promptly in accordance with this Policy.

Screening

ACOLA does not routinely engage staff or volunteers in child-related work. Where a role is identified as involving more than incidental contact with children, a Working with Vulnerable People registration (ACT) or equivalent check will be obtained in accordance with relevant state or territory legislation, and this requirement will be documented in the relevant position description or engagement agreement.

Third Parties and Partner Organisations

Where ACOLA provides funding or support to partner organisations that work with children, ACOLA will:

- require those partners to have and implement child safeguarding policies consistent with applicable laws and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations,
- include a child safeguarding clause in relevant funding and partnership agreements requiring partners to notify ACOLA of any serious child safety incidents or allegations relating to funded activities, and
- consider child safety practices as part of due diligence when selecting or renewing partnerships.

Child Safety Contact

ACOLA designates a Child Safety Contact responsible for receiving child safety concerns and coordinating ACOLA's response in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure.

Child Safety Contact: Diana Melham, Company Secretary

- Email: confidential@acola.org.au
- Post: GPO Box 783 CANBERRA ACT 2601 (marked 'CONFIDENTIAL')
- Phone: +61 0412 605 129

Where the Child Safety Contact is the subject of a concern, reports should be made directly to the CEO or Board Chair.

Reporting Child Safety Concerns

Any person, including staff, volunteers, Board members, participants, or members of the public, may report a child safety concern to ACOLA. Reports may be made anonymously. ACOLA will take all reports seriously regardless of whether the reporter identifies themselves.

Where a child is in immediate danger, the person who becomes aware of the concern must contact emergency services (000) immediately, before making an internal report.

Child safety concerns should be reported to the Child Safety Contact using the contact details above. All concerns will be received, assessed, investigated, and resolved in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure, which sets out ACOLA's procedures for acknowledgement, assessment, investigation, mandatory and external reporting obligations (including to child protection authorities, police, the ACNC, and funders), outcomes, and record keeping.

Confidentiality and privacy

All child safety concerns will be handled with strict confidentiality. Information will only be disclosed to those who need it to manage the concern or comply with legal obligations. The handling of personal information is governed by ACOLA's Privacy Policy.

Support for affected persons

ACOLA will ensure that any child, family member, or person who has reported a child safety concern has access to appropriate support, including information about external support services and referral to professional counselling where appropriate.

Whistleblower protections

Any person who reports a child safety concern in good faith is protected from retaliation under this Policy and, where applicable, under ACOLA's Whistleblower Policy and Part 9.4AAA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth).

Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this Policy will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or engagement. Where a breach involves criminal conduct, ACOLA will report the matter to the relevant authorities.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This Policy is informed by:

- *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth)
- ACNC Governance Standards (in particular Governance Standards 1 and 5)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT) and equivalent legislation in other jurisdictions where ACOLA operates
- Applicable state and territory mandatory reporting legislation
- *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), including whistleblower protections under Part 9.4AAA

ACOLA will monitor changes to this framework and update this policy accordingly.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner in the event of a child safety incident, a significant change in applicable law or the National Principles, or a material change to ACOLA's activities that increases the likelihood of contact with children.

The Board is responsible for approving amendments to this Policy.

Availability

The current version of this Policy is:

- published on ACOLA's website at [Policies | ACOLA](#)
- provided to new Board members, employees and key volunteers at induction
- available internally via relevant ACOLA SharePoint sites, and
- can be provided in hard copy on request from the Child Safety Contact at confidential@acola.org.au or Company Secretary at company.secretary@acola.org.au.

Version Control

<i>ACOLA Governance Policy</i>					
Version	Reviewed by	Date	Approved by	Date	Next Review
V1.2026	ARF Committee	15.06.26	ACOLA Board	01.07.28	01.07.28