1. Summary and Purpose

Edge Effect take a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse. This policy along with risk management and associated procedures seek to ensure that:

- No child experiences exploitation or abuse in association with Edge Effect activities.
- Any suspected or alleged child exploitation and abuse is reported quickly and through the correct channels to avoid further exploitation or abuse.
- Perpetrators of child exploitation and abuse are referred for external criminal or civil redress.
- Policy breaches are identified, and disciplinary action taken to address those breaches.
- Limitations of this policy and Edge Effect procedures are identified and addressed.

Edge Effect also takes a right-based and strengths-based approach to its work with all people. This includes Edge Effect operations being consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Glossary


<table>
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<th>Child Abuse</th>
<th>Includes:</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>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</td>
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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.

Child exploitation

One or more of the following:

- 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 or coercing another person to commit an act or acts of grooming or online grooming
- using a minor for profit, labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage.

Child or children

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ‘child’ means every human being under the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. For the purposes of this policy, DFAT considers a child to be a person under the age of 18 years.

Contact with Children

Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment (also see Working with children definition).

Working with Children

Working with children means being engaged in an activity with a child where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works.

3. Compliance and Responsibility

All Edge Effect office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers, and Edge Effect partners have shared responsibility for ensuring that this policy is followed, and to ensure that suspected or alleged instances of child exploitation or abuse, and suspected or alleged breaches of this policy are reported at the earliest opportunity.

Prior to participation in Edge Effect activities, office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers must read and sign a copy of this policy to agree that a) they understand all aspects of the policy and b) they will be bound by this child protection policy. Partners implementing activities on behalf of Edge Effect must also agree to be bound by this policy, and to provide their organisational child protection policy and compliance procedures to Edge Effect.
This policy applies to all activities, not only those directly involving children. Child abusers may seek to use aid projects to gain access to children, including through roles that do not directly involve working with children.

4. Recruitment and Criminal Background Check

All office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers working on projects assessed as involving contact with children or working with children must undergo the AFP Criminal Background Check prior to their engagement with Edge Effect, and after every 2 years after engagement. If the office-bearer, staff, consultant, or volunteer resided overseas for more than 12 months in any one country, a criminal background check from local authorities should also be provided. Australian state-based working with children certifications are not sufficient.

Where a role is part of a project assessed as involving contact with children or working with children, interviews will use behavioural-based questions to directly explore candidate awareness of child protection principles and good practice and examples of past engagements in which these were operationalised. Reference checks for all Edge Effect office-bearers, staff, contractors and volunteers for all positions will explicitly seek information on past compliance with child protection policies.

For instances where a criminal background check cannot be obtained, a statutory declaration may be provided. However provision of a statutory declaration should not become a default standard, and will only be accepted if: a) genuine effort is made to obtain the check, b) compelling reasons are provided why a check cannot be sought, or c) the engagement requires immediate deployment, a criminal background check is in process, and is provided within 28 days. For DFAT-funded projects Edge Effect will seek guidance from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Unit before accepting a statutory declaration in lieu of a criminal background check.

Where projects are assessed as involving contact with children or working with children Edge Effect partners must undertake the same checks for their staff and any downstream partners.

5. Child Protection Risk Assessment

All Edge Effect activities funded by DFAT must be reviewed for compliance with the DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note Establishing Child Protection Risk Context.

Edge Effect is not a child-focused agency, however certain projects may involve contact with children or working with children, and therefore require a full assessment of the child protection risks. The compliance review and assessment should also take into account that Edge Effect works with sexual and gender minorities who are often marginalised and vulnerable, and that specific consideration should be given to vulnerabilities that may be faced by SGM children. For example, steps such as seeking informed consent from a parent/guardian/carer may cause harm if the child's diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics are not accepted by family members or not know to family members.

All Edge Effect activities funded by donors other than DFAT should be consistent with the child protection risk assessment procedures of the relevant donor, however in the absence of other specific guidance
DFAT’s guidelines should be applied.

6. Child Protection in Humanitarian Settings

Children may be particularly vulnerable due to life disruptions in humanitarian emergencies. Edge Effect activities in humanitarian settings should also be designed and implemented consistent with the DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note Child Protection in Emergencies and to meet UNICEF Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. As for non-emergency settings, specific attention should be paid to vulnerabilities of SGM children, as they may face additional and different challenges than other children, and sector best practices may need to adapt to these circumstances.

7. Child Protection Professional Behaviours

The following (non-exclusive) list of professional behaviours when working with children or in contact with children is drawn directly from the the DFAT 2017 Child Protection Policy. All office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers are required meet these as the minimum standard for DFAT funded projects and on other projects. Partner organisations are also required to mandate these professional behaviours and to provide training for individuals or organisations implementing projects downstream from Edge Effect. Additional guidance may be provided for other projects, including additional considerations for application of these standards given the specific vulnerabilities often faced by SGM children in their families, communities and societies. The minimum standards require you to:

- “Treat all children with respect
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children
- Not invite unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case the supervisor’s permission must be obtained, and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (noting that this does not apply to an individual’s own children).
- Never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium.
- Not use physical punishment on children.
- Not hire children for domestic or other labour: which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage; which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities; or which places them at significant risk of injury.
• Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.

• Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures.

• Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before or occurs during association with DFAT.

• Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

• These behaviours are not intended to interfere with normal family interactions.

When photographing or filming a child or using children’s images for work-related purposes, the minimum standard require you to:

• Take care to ensure local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images are adhered to before photographing or filming a child.

• Obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.

• 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.

• Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts.

• 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.

Source: DFAT 2017 Child Protection Policy

8. Child Protection Training

All Edge Effect office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers will undertake training on this policy and in child protection, at a minimum this will include training on the DFAT professional behaviours in section 6 above.

Training on this policy will be provided for new office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers, and refresher training will be provided if a) this policy changes or b) after two years has elapsed from the previous training.
Child protection training will be available to all office-bearers, staff, consultants at least once per calendar year. For projects where a full assessment of child protection risks is required, all office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers working on that project will be required to a) undertake specific child protection training or b) provide evidence of equivalent training in the previous 2 years. A register of all office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers working on that project will be kept, along with records of child protection training.

Where projects are assessed as involving contact with children or working with children Edge Effect partners must undertake training for their staff and any downstream partners.

9. Internal Reporting

All suspected or alleged instances of child exploitation or abuse by Edge Effect office-bearers, staff, consultants, volunteers or partners, or within any project connected with Edge Effect, must be reported to the Managing Director at the earliest possible opportunity. Delaying reporting may result in children being exposed to further exploitation or abuse. Even if you are unsure, report. Confidential reports may be made using the form available on the about section of the Edge Effect website; reports through that form will be sent directly to the Managing Director.

For instances where reporting to the Managing Director is inappropriate, the report should be made directly to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Unit at childwelfare@dfat.gov.au using the Child Incident Notification Form, and/or similar procedures of other donor or contracting organisations.

Suspected or alleged instances of child exploitation or abuse that you learn of through your Edge Effect role but that do not involve Edge Effect should also be reported to relevant managers or authorities. Contact the Managing Director for advice on these instances as soon as possible.

10. External Reporting

Suspected or alleged instances of child exploitation or abuse, or other significant breaches of this policy will also be reported to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Unit, to child protection units of any other relevant donor, and to relevant upstream organisations to which Edge Effect has reporting responsibilities. Following consultation with those entities, instances that may constitute criminal activity will be referred to police in Australia and/or the relevant country. If there is reason to believe that referral will put the child/children at further risk of harm, Edge Effect will seek advice from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Unit and child protection experts on appropriate steps.

11. Investigation

The Managing Director will investigate all reported breaches, except where the report involves the Managing Director, in which case an external investigator will be appointed. Investigations will be undertaken with due process.
12. Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action will be taken against any office-bearer, staff, consultant, volunteer or partner found to be in breach of this policy, including potential dismissal or termination of contract. A register of all reports, investigations and actions will be maintained.

13. Other Relevant Policy

Office-bearers, staff, consultants, and volunteers must also follow the provisions of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Child Protection Policy and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program, especially the second key safeguard on Children, vulnerable and disadvantage groups. Where Edge Effect is implementing projects funded by other donors, their child protection policies should also be followed, along with all relevant local laws and regulations.

14. Relevant Links

DFAT 2017 Child Protection Policy

DFAT Child Protection Incident Notification Form

DFAT Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy for the Aid Program

UNICEF Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

15. Policy Approval and Review

This policy is approved by Emily Dwyer, Managing Director.
This policy will be reviewed by 15 January 2019.
Child Protection Policy Declaration

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Edge Effect Child Protection Policy.

Signature: ................................................................. Date: .................................

Please Print Name: ...........................................................