



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
WANIATI MATERNAL WAITING HOME INCORPORATED

“SAVE
A
WOMAN
SAVE
A
NATION
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WANIATI MATERNAL WAITING HOME INC.

through

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

“MATERNAL
WAITING
HUT.”



**REDUCTION OF MATERNAL AND CHILD MORBIDITY
AND MORTALITY IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA through
MATERNAL WAITING HUT.**



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
WANIATI MATERNAL WAITING HOME INCORPORATED

Organization	Waniati maternal waiting home
Policy Title	Child Protection
Version	1.0
Status	Final
Short description	This policy outlines Waniati Development Association's commitment to child protection and recognizes the important role and responsibility of all staff, pregnant women and representatives in the protection of children. It includes Waniati Development Association's expectations when child abuse is reported or suspected by Waniati Development Association.
Relevant to	All Waniati maternal waiting home personnel and associates (including those in part-time and temporary roles, contractors, donors, photographers, j journalists and volunteers) are expected to be familiar with this policy, its associated procedures and protocols and must abide by them.
Authority	This Policy has been approved by the WMWH Board of Directors.
Responsible officer	HR, Executive Director
Responsible office	HR
Date introduced	January 2023
Date(s) modified	July 2025
Next scheduled review date	July 2028
Related College documents	Child Protection Delegates
Related legislation	Lukautim Pikinini Act 2015; Family and Sexual Violence Policy; PNG Country Report



INTRODUCTION

Waniati maternal waiting home (WMWH) is a Charity Organization relentlessly committed to improving the health of poor and marginalized pregnant women of Papua New Guinea. WMWH ensure urban disadvantaged and rural majority of the pregnant women be accommodated and cared with basic necessities before delivery, thereby increasing the level of safe delivery and reducing the maternal and child morbidity and mortality in rural and peri urban villages of Goroka town.

The other purpose is to advocate people on Gender based violence cases and what can be done to solve this Law & Order issue. We also provide legal advice to Gender based violence and sorcery accusation related violence in the communities. WMWH has number of these programs involve direct interaction with children.

This policy outlines WMWH's policy in devoting to safeguard all children assisted by WMWH from abuse and exploitation by its personnel, including (but not limited to) its staff, directors, volunteers, contractors, partners and donors. WMWH reckons the impacts and risks for children in the development and planning of all programs and their implementation, monitoring and review.

POLICY STATEMENT

WMWH is dedicated to the protection of children from harm, abuse and exploitation. WMWH is committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure that all children whom we work are provided a child safe environment at all times in consultation with the Lukautim Pikinini Act 2015; Family & Sexual Violence Policy; PNG Country Report.

PURPOSE

WMWH has developed this Child Protection Policy to provide a practical guide to prevent child abuse in WMWH's programs. It outlines a range of Child Protection risk management strategies that are to be implemented at all times to reduce the risk of children being harmed. It provides guidance on how to respond to concerns, reports and allegations of child abuse and provides guidance to WMWH personnel on how to work respectfully and effectively with children.



PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND BELIEFS

WMWH's Child Protection Policy and practices in accordance with the guiding principles, values and beliefs set out below.

Zero Tolerance of Child Abuse

WMWH believes that any form of child abuses and exploitation is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Representation

WMWH believes that all children should be equally protected regardless of their gender, nationality, religious or political beliefs, age, sexual orientation, ability, family and social background and culture, economic status, physical or mental health and criminal background.

Shared Responsibility

The protection of children is the responsibility of all personnel, partners and associates of WMWH.

Child Rights

WMWH is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of all children, including the right to safety, without fear of abuse or exploitation, and to have their views heard on matters affecting them.

Duty of Care

Adherence to this Child Protection Policy is a mandatory requirement for all personnel, partners and associates of WMWH.

Confidentiality

WMWH will ensure it provides a service and environment where children are respected and feel safe at all times. This includes WMWH meeting its obligation to maintain the confidentiality of children's information as much as practicably possible.



SCOPE

This policy applies to the following:

1. All personnel and associates of WMWH:
 - ❖ Permanent, part-time and casual staff
 - ❖ Individual contractors and consultants
 - ❖ Volunteers
 - ❖ Board members
 - ❖ Partners with a formal / contractual relationship with WMWH
 - ❖ Interns
 - ❖ Work experience students

2. For others engaged by WMWH (known as 'representatives') having contact with children such as:
 - ❖ Journalists and media personnel
 - ❖ Photographers
 - ❖ Donors
 - ❖ Supporters
 - ❖ Guest presenters
 - ❖ Visitors including the spouse / partner or family member of WMWH personnel or associates.

This Policy applies to all WMWH staff and representatives in all operating contexts and at all times, including during and outside of standard business hours. By becoming a staff member or representative of WMWH the obligations and requirements of this Policy are accepted as mandatory.



DEFINITIONS

Child Protection: is the term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused or maltreated.

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.

Child Abuse: abuse happens to male and female children of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds, abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and political persuasion. Child abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, 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. Professionals and other adults working with children in a position of trust can also abuse children.

A Child or Young Person: any person under the age of 18 years.

Duty of Care: is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organization to provide children with adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organization to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of abuse, harm or injury.

Emotional Abuse: occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. This may involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from parent, responsible adult or caregiver; to the extent that it affects the child's physical and emotional growth.

Employee: any person who provides services for compensation to WMWH and whose duties are under the direction of the WMWH.

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 that are to the detriment of the child's physical and mental health, education, or moral and social



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emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labour, child trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

Neglect: is the persistent failure or the deliberate denial to provide the child with clean water, food, shelter, sanitation or supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk.

Physical Abuse: occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Sexual Abuse: occurs when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification - regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. These can be contact or noncontact acts, including sexualized language, voyeurism, fondling genitals or breasts, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object and exposing a child to, or involving a child in pornography.

Volunteer: Any person who enters into WMWH's programs, or offers any service of their own free will, and who does not receive compensation for such a service.

Child labour: use of children for work, especially work that is hazardous or interrupts a child's right to education and development.

Child protection incident: A child protection incident is (a) any form of child as defined in section 1.3 Definitions; or (b) any breach of this Policy or Code of Conduct, and, that is: committed by a WMWH staff members or representatives; or (d) where has a duty of care towards the child.

Child rights: Children have the "right to life, survival and development" where development encompasses physical, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.



Child trafficking: Relates to any role in the recruitment and transportation or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, by means of treat, force or other forms of coercion. This includes abuse of power.

Family and sexual violence: Family violence means any violence between family members including current or former partners in an intimate relationship. Family violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, stalking, damage to property, and control through socially isolating the victim, or threats to do any of the aforementioned acts.

Sexual violence means any sexual act against a person's sexuality using coercion including an attempt to obtain a sexual act and unwanted sexual comments or advances, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Family and sexual violence encompasses family violence and sexual violence as described above. It should be noted that while family violence may be perpetrated by family members, sexual violence may be perpetrated by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim.

Commercial sexual exploitation: Where a child is sexually abused or exploited and the child or a third person/s in remunerated in cash or kind.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clearly outlines acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour in relation to working with children. It applies to all WMWH staff and representatives and provides them with clear guidance on how to minimise risks to children, including when working with other organisations.

All WMWH personnel who come into contact with children must sign and adhere to WMWH's Child Protection Code of Conduct.

The WMWH Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that a signed copy of the Code of Conduct is held on file for all WMWH staff and representatives.

All WMWH staff and representatives must abide by the Child Protection Code of Conduct in their activities with WMWH for all children anyway and at any time.

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES



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WMWH undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:

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

RECRUITMENT

WMWH undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:

- At all cost, WMWH will promote and protect the safety of all children;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share our values and commitment to protect children; and
- If a person poses a risk to children, WMWH prevents that person from working for the organization.
- WMWH will not allow staff to work with children/women if unacceptable risk is identified.

This screening process includes:

- stating in all job advertisements that WMWH is committed to child protection and that recruitment and selection procedures will reflect this.
- National Police checks;
- referee checking; and
- use of behavioral-based interview questions that probe the applicant's past behavior relating to children in specific situations relevant to the position (these give interviewers additional information as to the applicant's suitability to work with children).

This policy commits WMWH to preventing a person from working with children if they pose an unacceptable risk to children. All employment contracts must contain provisions for dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties for any personnel who breach the Child Protection Policy or Child Protection Code of Conduct.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Whilst Waniati maternal waiting home is aware that it cannot control all risks of child abuse and exploitation, it commits to ensuring the risks of child abuse and exploitation are identified, monitored and reasonably mitigated against. In the interest of preventing risk, WMWH conducts a child protection and safeguarding risk assessment as part of the development of all new projects. Mitigation strategies are put in place for any risk identified and are actively monitored



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throughout the activity/program cycle, at least on a quarterly basis. Guidelines on conducting a child protection risk assessment guidelines are located here. The Administrative Committee, and staff are critically important to effective risk management and will specifically discuss child protection in the course of developing and implementing risk management plans. WMWH risk management tools and skills shall be utilized to mitigate child protection risks.

USE OF PHOTOS, IMAGES AND CASE STUDIES OF CHILDREN:

WMWH will at all times portray children in a respectful, appropriate and consensual way. Our guidelines on the use of children's images are:

- No pre-natal or neonate at the maternal waiting hut will have their images captured in still or film form (except if requested by an authority for the purpose of legal proceeding or medical evidence)
- WMWH will always seek permission when taking photographs or recording video footage of individuals (including children) in PNG;
- Any other child images captured should be only captured with the consent of the child/ren and parents. When asking for consent, clear details should be given as to how and this image will be used.
- WMWH will always explain to the subject the likely use of the images or video footage;
- WMWH will not take pictures of people who refused to be photographed or filmed;
- Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;
- Children should be portrayed as part of their community.
- There should be no identifying information of the child used in the publication of images. This includes the child's family name, community or school name;
- Children should always be portrayed in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- Images will be current and appropriate;
- WMWH employees will ensure the privacy of personal information concerning children including their name and location, when sending and storing images electronically and when using images publicly.



CHILD SAFEGUARDING TRAINING & EDUCATION

WMWH will provide training to all its personnel and representatives about child protection and abuse, WMWH's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, how to reduce risks, and how to create child safe environments. We will promote child safe practices which keep children safe in the organization and in their own community, and provide information about child protection to the children and communities in which we work.

WMWH personnel are required to participate in child protection training as part of their induction, in annual intensive workshops and in refresher and targeted training depending on their role or contact with children.

Staff with specialist child safeguarding responsibilities, including WMWH's Child Protection Officer will be supported to attend child safeguarding training delivered externally to stay informed of current practice.

WMWH commits to undertake capacity building and training in child safeguarding with all development partners who work with us to implement programs that involve or affect children.

PARTNERS' ENGAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For the purpose of the policy, partners are defined as those with whom formal relationships, including funding agreements and memorandums of understanding, are held for implementing projects. These may include but are not limited to:

- ❖ Academic and research institutions
- ❖ International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs)
- ❖ Local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations
- ❖ Government bodies (National, Provincial or Local)



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- ❖ Churches and other interfaith groups
- ❖ Partners and subcontractors who are engaged by WMWH to perform any part of an activity (including DFAT Australian Aid funded activities)

WMWH determines a partners' status as a child safe organization by including child safeguarding in the partner capacity assessment and appraisal processes and commits to strengthening partners' capacity to protect children in our programs by investing in targeted capacity building, training and awareness raising on child safeguarding. This includes socializing the expectations extended to partners with regards to implementation of child safeguarding behaviors.

CORRESPONDENCE OR VISITS BETWEEN DONORS AND CHILDREN:

WMWH recognizes the need to implement specific guidelines to manage the child protection risks associated with any programs where correspondence or visits between donors or sponsors are facilitated (although this is mainly discouraged across the organization's programming and fundraising). These guidelines include ensuring that:

- ❖ WMWH will screen all correspondence, including letters and gifts.
- ❖ Favoritism must not be shown through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- ❖ Children's personal addresses or contact information will not be disclosed by WMWH.
- ❖ Personal address or contact information of a child must not be revealed by donor.
- ❖ Donor will not send money directly to a child
- ❖ Child safeguarding briefing that includes clear child protection and behavioral guidelines will be issued to all sponsors/volunteers/donors.
- ❖ Police/working with children checks are **not** required for visiting sponsors/volunteers/donors and any accompanying family members
- ❖ All sponsors/visitors are expected to read and abide by WMWH's Child Protection Policy and read, abide and sign the Child Protection Code of Conduct and Organizational Code of Conduct



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- ❖ WMWH or its partner agency staff will be present at all times during the visit/ program
- ❖ Children should not be invited to leave or taken away from maternal waiting hut
- ❖ Sponsors/volunteers/donors' country invitations are not permitted.
- ❖ The exchange of mailing addresses and contact details (including online forums and social media platforms) is not permitted at any time
- ❖ WMWH will monitor all visits to ensure all children are protected from all forms of abuses.
- ❖ Return visits to the child/community without the facilitation of WMWH will be considered as a breach of the Child Protection Policy or Child Protection Code of Conduct and follow up action will be taken by WMWH, including reporting to authorities if deemed necessary.

TRAVEL OF CHILDREN

WMWH does not permit visits of children outside of PNG.

If the travel of a child or young person within PNG is required, the travel is to be organized by WMWH in accordance with the following principles:

1. It is important at all times to consider the safety and wellbeing of the child/young person;
2. WMWH must obtain permission from the child/young person's parent or guardian before the young person travels outside of their home country;

In the majority of cases, children travelling associated with WMWH's projects will be the children of WMWH employees or other WMWH personnel and will be travelling with their parents or guardians. WMWH is still committed to prioritizing the child's health, safety and wellbeing in these cases.

REPORTING AND PROCESSING OF ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

WMWH considers the abuse and exploitation of children to be completely unacceptable. We will take all concerns and reports of child abuse seriously and act on these reports immediately. WMWH is committed to a reporting process which is truthful, fair and professional.



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WMWH's child protection reporting procedures are guided by the following:

- + swift and appropriate action where there are reasonable grounds for belief of child abuse;
- + reporting and notification obligations under PNG or Australian law;
- + duty of care obligations;
- + client confidentiality obligations;
- + child and client safety; and
- + employees and other relevant individuals' legal rights.

Responsibility to Report

All WMWH staff and representatives are responsible to report any suspicion, allegation or witnessing of a child protection incident.

- a) any form of child abuses as defined in section 1.3 Definitions; **or**
- b) any breach of this Policy or the Code of Conduct, **and**, that is:
 - (c) committed by WMWH staff or representative; **or**
 - (d) where WMWH has a duty of care towards the child.

Reporting Procedure and Flow Chart

WMWH staff and representatives must report the child protection incident (or suspected child protection incident) to the Child Protection Delegate *immediately*, or within 24 hours of the incident/receipt of information if they are in a location or situation which prevents them from reporting immediately.

The report will generally be made verbally in the first instance but must be followed up by a detailed written account of the incident. Whether reporting verbally or in writing, it should be done confidentially. The below flow-chart depicts the reporting process and the responsibility of each party:

1. Must report child protection incident or suspected child protection incident to Program manager, Program coordinator or appropriate Manager immediately or at most within 24 hours.
2. Records incident.
3. Works with management to determine action and investigation required.
4. As appropriate, the spiritual enrichment team will provide support and counselling.
5. Responsible for overseeing referral of incident to relevant authority where required; or to Board of directors.
6. Updates reporting staff member that action has been taken.
7. Reports child protection incidents immediately to Executive management if high risk, complex, or circumstances require, and otherwise at quarterly meetings.
8. If unsure speak with the Program manager or Human Resource Officer.



Confidentiality and Safety

Confidentiality (i.e. protection of the identities of the reporter, victim and perpetrator) should be ensured to the fullest degree possible under the circumstances. All details of the reporting and investigation process are kept as confidential as possible within the requirements of the law, and only shared with relevant persons (this could include local authorities). Provisions will be made for the protection of the person reporting an issue or concern if they have a genuine fear for their physical safety. The child's safety is the paramount consideration for WMWH and provision for the child's safety and wellbeing will be prioritised.

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

Reporting processes are summarized here; details are contained within WMWH's Child Protection.

WMWH will treat all concerns raised seriously and ensure that all parties will be treated fairly. WMWH will investigate and respond to reports of child, abuse in WMWH programs in ways which are consistent with PNG law. All reports will be handled professionally, confidentially and expediently.

Details procedures are outlines as follows;

1. Receive the allegation in a timely manner
2. Document the allegation by completing WMWH's Child Protection Incident Reporting Tool and in the case of DFAT funded projects, complete the DFAT child abuse incident reporting tool.
3. Notify WMWH's Child Protection Working Group and Executive Director (and board report in severe cases).
4. Undertake investigation including:
 - a) Notify the subject of the complaint and allow them the opportunity to state his or her perspective of the incident(s). An alleged perpetrator of child abuse will be suspended from their normal duties pending outcomes of the investigation
 - b) Gather and study background material and documentary evidence
 - c) Interview complainant
 - d) Interview victims if different from above
 - e) Interview witnesses if they exist
 - f) Write an investigation report



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5. Report to local police and or child protection authority when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed
6. Report to the Australian Federal Police when it is suspected or becomes clear that a crime has been committed regarding child sex tourism, child sex trafficking and child pornography
7. Report to local child protection services as necessary and if available
8. Handle the concern internally if it is not a criminal matter

9. Conclude investigation with recommendation
10. The findings of the investigation and recommendation will be reviewed for appropriate disciplinary action by the CEO and appropriate members of the board of directors
11. Advise all parties of relevant aspects of action to be taken
12. Deal with the investigation in a timely manner from its commencement and as considered appropriate by the Board of Directors and advice from relevant authorities

After appropriate investigation, any employee who has been found to have either been involved in the abuse of a child, or who was aware of such a situation but did not report it, will be subject to appropriate discipline, including possible termination of employment. Appropriate government authorities must be notified.

Confidentiality is a key principle of reporting and managing child protection concerns. All information regarding a child protection concern must only be shared with the designated Manager, CEO or Child Protection Working Group.

All relevant WMWH Employees (including the Executive Director, Child Protection Working Group members, Program Heads, and any other representative where agreed upon by the CEO) must sign and adhere to WMWH's Child Protection Confidentiality Agreement.

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.

CHILD FRIENDLY DISCLOSURE & COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY



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WMWH has a child friendly complaints handling mechanism in place and children need to be aware that the mechanism exists and how to submit complaints. Formalities need to be reduced to the minimum absolutely necessary and children need to be able to submit a complaint directly to WMWH personnel.

If a child discloses abuse, whatever the outcome, the child must be taken seriously. WMWH personnel must remain calm and in control and reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

When a child or young person discloses they are being harmed you can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- Listening carefully
- Telling the child you believe him or her
- Telling the child it is not their fault and he/she is not responsible for the abuse
- Telling the child you are pleased he/she told you.

The above processes must then be followed for reporting the claim, completing an investigation and making reports to authorities where relevant. Information for the child is an essential element of a child-friendly complaint mechanism and the child must be kept informed of the process, the status of the complaint, and the outcome.

MEASURES FOR BREACH OF POLICY

The following measures can be applied for any personnel, associate or representative who breaches the Child Protection Policy and / or Code of Conduct:

- ❖ Meeting to discuss breach and opportunity for person to provide their account / understanding of the situation. If a staff member is suspected of abusing a child or causing a child to witness abuse - then they are given an immediate warning in relation to their employment status
- ❖ Performance management
- ❖ Further education on the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct
- ❖ Formal warning and monitoring



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- ❖ Transfer to other duties
- ❖ Suspension pending investigation
- ❖ Internal investigation
- ❖ Report to Police
- ❖ Dismissal

These measures will apply alongside any criminal investigation where relevant.

MONITORING OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

WMWH is committed to ensuring the currency of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that the policy is reviewed after two years and that it continues to support the ethical and safe work of WMWH in PNG. Any change made to the Policy will be signed off by WMWH's Board of Directors.

WMWH employees will periodically assess all WMWH documentation, policies and procedures against these standards and accordingly, recommend and implement changes if necessary.