

Acicis Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

Acicis has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation, abuse and harm. Acicis has a commitment to safeguarding children from harm and respects children's right to safety and freedom, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹ Acicis recognises that it is a shared responsibility of all adults to prevent child exploitation, abuse and harm.

This policy has been written with guidance from the Australian Government's *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy*,² which is part of DFAT's child protection framework.²

2. Scope of this Policy

The policy applies to:

- Acicis staff in Indonesia and Australia
- Acicis interns and participant buddies in Indonesia and Australia
- Any other volunteers or contractors engaged directly by Acicis
- All participants on Acicis in-country study programs
- Members of the Acicis National Reference Group

Acicis partner universities and host organisations in Indonesia are expected to act in accordance with this policy. They must also abide by their own relevant legislation, regulations, policies, international declarations, conventions, agreements and the UNCRC, which seek to protect children.

3. Policy Principles

Principle 1: Zero tolerance of child exploitation, abuse and harm

- Acicis has a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation, abuse and harm in all aspects of its work.
- Acicis does not knowingly engage anyone who poses a risk to children.
- Acicis uses robust recruitment and screening processes to ensure that staff, participants, partners and other individuals it engages do not pose a risk to children.
- Acicis works to minimise the risks of child exploitation, abuse, and harm associated with its programs and trains staff, participants and partners on their obligations under this policy.

Principle 2: Prioritise the best interests of the child

- Acicis ensures that all actions and decisions prioritise children's rights, safety and wellbeing, underpinned by a 'do not harm' approach.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

² Australian Government's *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy*, September 2025: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/child-protection-policy.pdf>

Principle 3: Promote inclusion and equity and recognise diversity

- Acicis is inclusive of all children regardless of their circumstances, abilities, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, displacement, and social, economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Acicis is committed to addressing barriers to participation, protection, reporting, and support, including those related to language, safety, discrimination and accessibility.
- Where appropriate, Acicis will support children to understand their rights, express concerns about their safety and wellbeing, and have their views considered in matters affecting them, in ways that are age-appropriate, culturally appropriate and safe

Principle 4: Prioritise prevention

- Acicis is proactive in promoting the safety of children and minimizing risks to children.

Principle 5: Reporting incidents is mandatory

- Acicis requires mandatory and immediate reporting (within 24 hours) of any suspected, alleged or known child protection concerns related to Acicis.
- Acicis's reporting mechanisms ensure that those who raise concerns are protected from retaliation and that concerns are addressed effectively, in a timely and appropriate manner.

Principle 6: Assess and manage child protection risk and impact

- Acicis takes responsibility for assessing and managing child protection risk and impact using a risk-based approach proportionate to the level of contact with children.

Principle 7: Sharing responsibility for child protection

- Acicis requires the commitment, support and cooperation of partner universities and host organisations to manage potential risks to children.

Principle 8: Procedural fairness

- Acicis will apply procedural fairness when making decisions that affect a person's rights or interests, and expects all partners to adhere to this principle when responding to concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse.

Principle 9: Embed safeguarding into organisational culture and leadership

- Acicis embeds child protection in governance, leadership and institutional culture and commits to investment of resources and continuous review and improvement of policies and practices.

4. Risk Based Approach

Acicis applies a risk-based approach to child protection. If an Acicis program or activity involves potential contact with children, an assessment of child protection risk will be conducted. These assessments will be documented and continue to be monitored for any change in risk settings. If an Acicis program or activity involves 'working with children', Acicis participants are required to obtain a relevant Criminal Record Check (or equivalent) before being permitted to undertake the program.

5. Responsibilities under the Policy

Acicis Staff

Acicis staff must ensure child protection risk is considered in all aspects of Acicis' operations. Acicis staff are expected to act in accordance with Acicis' Child Protection Code of Conduct and the policy principles outlined in this document.

Acicis Participants

Acicis participants are expected to act in accordance with Acicis' Child Protection Code of Conduct and the policy principles outlined in this document.

Acicis Partners

Acicis partners are expected to act in accordance with Acicis' Child Protection Code of Conduct and the policy principles outlined in this document.

6. Reporting, Non-compliance and Sanctions

If there is any suspicion, allegation or known incident of child exploitation, abuse or harm in an activity related to Acicis, it must be reported to the Acicis Consortium Director immediately (and within 24 hours) via email at childprotection@acicis.edu.au. Anonymous reports are permitted; however, Acicis may have limited ability to follow up on anonymous reports.

Where the allegation concerns the Consortium Director, or where a conflict of interest exists, the matter must be reported directly to the Chair of the National Reference Group's Risk Committee (or their nominee). Any person who is the subject of a report, or who has a conflict of interest in relation to a report, must not participate in the assessment, investigation, decision-making process or determination of sanctions arising from that matter.

Victim-survivors and their families may report directly to Acicis at any time. Reporting is encouraged but not mandatory for victim-survivors; Acicis will provide support and care regardless of whether a formal report is made.

When responding to any report of child exploitation, abuse or harm, the Consortium Director (or appropriate delegate) must ensure every action is taken to adhere to the policy principles in this document.

If a report is received, the Consortium Director (*or appropriate delegate*) will complete the report template provided in Appendix A. The Consortium Director (or appropriate delegate) will refer to the *DFAT Child and Adult Safeguards Implementation Handbook*³ when dealing with a report of child exploitation, abuse or harm.

In the event of a report, the Consortium Director (or appropriate delegate) will convey the completed report template to the Acicis National Reference Group before also conveying it – if appropriate – to the relevant authorities in Indonesia and Australia. The National Reference Group will then conduct a formal investigation and impose sanctions if and where deemed necessary.

³ *DFAT Child and Adult Safeguards Implementation Handbook*: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/child-adult-safeguards-implementation-handbook-staff-partners.pdf>

7. Minimum Child Protection Standards

Requirement	Minimum Standard	Evidence
Child Protection Policy	Acicis implements this child protection policy and raises awareness with all parties to adhere to this policy.	• Child Policy Protection in place. • Personnel aware of this policy. • Initial risk assessment of partner/activities to inform policy development.
Reporting Procedures	Reporting procedure in place, including mandatory 24-hour reporting timeframe.	• Clear line of reporting outlined within this policy. • 24-hour reporting requirement communicated to all personnel. • Personnel aware of the processes.
Risk Assessment	Acicis undertakes an assessment of child protection risk in a program or activity involves children.	• Risk plan and measures in place. • Documentation that risk assessments are reviewed annually and updated.
Placement/Activity Practices	Acicis participants in direct, sustained or significant contact with children must provide a current criminal record check issued by the relevant authority in their country of citizenship and from any other jurisdiction in which they have lived for 12 months or more.	• Participants to provide a copy of a valid Criminal Record Check before starting relevant program activities in Indonesia (where applicable). • Records are maintained securely.
Training	Acicis provides child protection training to all relevant staff, participants and partners. Training is completed annually.	• Evidence of training completion • Training records maintained and updated annually.
Code of Conduct	All Acicis staff and participants sign and adhere to Acicis' Child Protection Code of Conduct.	• Signed Code of Conduct on file for all personnel. • Code consistent with DFAT's Child Protection Code of Conduct.

8. Photographing, Filming and Use of Children's Images

Acicis will advise all staff, participants and other relevant parties of their obligations when photographing or filming children or using children's images for Acicis-related purposes. The below principles have been written with guidance from the *DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note: Use of Images and Social Media*.⁴

⁴ *DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note: Use of Images and Social Media, May 2026.*

General Principles

- Acicis will not use any images of children for marketing and promotional purposes without following the consent procedures below.
- Acicis will only take photos or footage of children with prior informed consent from both the child's parent or guardian and, where possible, the child themselves.
- When interacting with children, professional boundaries must be maintained at all times. Communication with children must be transparent, appropriate and directly related to Acicis activities.
- Images of children must present children in a dignified, respectful and age-appropriate manner. Acicis will be culturally sensitive when taking images and will consult field staff and communities about how they would like to be represented.
- Acicis will not publish or share images, footage or accompanying information that could identify or locate a child, including names, schools, locations, routines, uniforms or other sensitive information. Before publishing or sharing an image of a child, Acicis staff and participants should consider whether the image could identify the child, be misused, or unnecessarily focus attention on an individual child. Where there is any doubt, the image should not be used or a safer alternative should be considered, such as:
 - Group photos where no individual child is identifiable
 - Blurred faces or obscured identities
 - Photos from behind, or showing only hands, feet, or shadows
 - Activity-based content that shows the work, event, or environment rather than individual children as the main object
 - Wide shots where children are incidental and not identifiable
 - Images of objects, artwork, or materials instead of children

Consent Procedures

- Prior informed consent must be obtained before taking photos or footage of children. Consent forms must be stored securely.
- Verbal consent may be accepted where written consent is impractical but must be clearly documented and stored securely.
- Children and parents/caregivers must be advised that they can withdraw consent at any time and provided with a contact to do so. They must also be advised that, due to the permanency of online content, withdrawal of consent may not always lead to the removal of an image once published. Acicis will maintain a process for removing images from its image library where consent is withdrawn.

Staff, Participant and Visitor Obligations

- All staff, participants and visitors must be briefed on and comply with Acicis' child protection Code of Conduct.
- External photographers must not be unsupervised with children and must always be appropriately supervised by a staff member when undertaking work for Acicis..
- Agreements with external photographers, consultants and media providers must include child protection clauses covering the taking, use and storage of images and footage. Images and footage remain the property of Acicis; and cannot be used for any other purpose without Acicis consent.

9. Date of Effect

This policy is effective as of 21 September 2026 and will be reviewed every five years.

10. Glossary

The following definitions are taken from the Australian Government's *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy*.

Child or children: DFAT defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18.

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, and online or digital abuse. It also includes a child or children witnessing such abuse against another child or adult.

Child exploitation refers to one or more of the following actions:

- 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 an act of grooming, including online grooming
- Using a child for profit, labour, sexual gratification, trafficking, forced labour, or any other personal or financial advantage

Harm refers to any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by financial, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and/or sexual abuse or exploitation, whether intended or unintended.

Victim-survivor: A child victim-survivor is a person under the age of 18 who is, or has been, abused, exploited or harmed. 'Victim-survivor' acknowledges both the harm suffered (victim) and the resilience or agency of the child in coping with the aftermath (survivor). This term emphasises a supportive, rights-based approach to addressing their needs and upholding their dignity throughout the reporting and response process.

Safeguarding: Safeguards are measures taken to avoid or minimise the potential negative impacts of Acicis' operations and programs on the communities and environments in which ACICIS works and operates. In the context of this Policy, Acicis seeks to promote child safety and minimise the risks of harm to children.

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.

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.

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.

Ill-treatment – disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate 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.

Online or digital abuse – refers to abuse perpetrated through digital means, including online grooming, cyberbullying, viewing, producing or distributing child exploitation material, and other forms of exploitation or abuse occurring through the internet or digital technology.

11. References

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
2. Australian Government's *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Child Protection Policy*
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/child-protection-policy.pdf>
3. *DFAT Child Protection Guidance Note: Use of Images and Social Media, May 2026*

Appendix 1 – Report Template

To be completed by the Acicis Consortium Director (or appropriate delegate) upon receipt of a report of suspected, alleged or known child exploitation, abuse or harm.

1. Person reporting	
Name: Position: Date of report:	Telephone: Email:
2. Program/Activity	
Program/Activity:	

3. Type of Allegation	
Please indicate the most appropriate description of the alleged incident: Sexual abuse\Sexual misconduct Physical Abuse Neglect Psychological abuse Online/digital abuse Other	Further details if known (Date\location\when report was received): Other relevant details: (For example implements used, vulnerability, or disability factors):
4. Details of Person against whom the allegation has been made	
Family Name:	
Given Name:	
Sex:	
Date of birth:	
Nationality:	
Contact details:	
Employer\Partner:	

Role (circle as applicable):	Acicis Employee	Australian Citizen or Indonesian Citizen	Acicis Partner Employee	Acicis Participant	Other
Position (if applicable):					
5. Details of Victim-Survivor					
Family Name:					
Given Name:					
Sex:					
Date of birth:					
Nationality:					
Contact details:					
Age of child at time of alleged incident:					
Have any injuries been observed or reported?					
6. Further Details					
Is the victim-survivor still in danger of abuse or harm?					
Are local police or other local authorities aware of the incident/allegation?					
What other authorities have been informed?					

Has any other Acicis staff been advised or consulted? If so, what is their response or proposed action?	
Have support services been accessed or offered to the victim-survivor?	
7. Any other pertinent information for initial assessment?	
