

CODE OF CONDUCT – SAFEGUARDING



INTRODUCTION

Australian Doctors for Africa (ADFA) supports the rights of children and takes a zero tolerance approach to child exploitation and abuse. ADFA takes a risk based approach to child safety and uses careful management to identify, mitigate, manage or reduce risks to children that may be associated with its initiatives. Likewise, ADFA has a zero tolerance of sexual exploitation, abuse, bullying and harassment of vulnerable people.

ADFA staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors have an obligation to uphold high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times, to understand the inherent imbalance of power which exists, and must not abuse this position to exploit or abuse another person.

CODE OF CONDUCT

I, _____, engaged by Australian Doctors for Africa, agree that I will:

Child Safeguarding

- Recognise that risk to the safety of children is inherent in the delivery of ADFA programs overseas, due to the nature of programs (delivery of health services) and the vulnerability of the beneficiary population due to poverty, disability and power-inequity. As such, I will ensure to be mindful of this risk in all that I do, during the course of my involvement with ADFA.
- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts.
- Ensure another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, hotel or a remote or isolated area 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).
- 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.
- Not use any computers, mobile phones or video and digital cameras inappropriately and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium.
- Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Ensure that I immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse or exploitation in accordance with ADFA's reporting requirements.
- 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 ADFA.
- Be aware of behaviour and avoid actions or behaviours that could be perceived by others as child exploitation and abuse.

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Furthermore, I acknowledge that:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse constitute acts of gross misconduct. This would be deemed grounds for termination of employment of staff. Volunteers or associates would not be invited to participate in further trips where evidence was substantiated. Reports to appropriate authorities will be determined by the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy.
- Sexual activity with children under 18 is prohibited regardless of the age of majority locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Sexual relationships between ADFA staff, volunteers or associates and beneficiaries are forbidden, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of foreign aid work.
- Fraternisation (as defined in the PSEAH Policy) is prohibited while on assignment with ADFA.
- Where an ADFA staff member, volunteer or associate develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, s/he must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
- ADFA staff, volunteers or associates are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, and which promotes the implementation of their code of conduct.
- Team leaders have a particular responsibility to support and develop systems which maintain an environment which is safe for children and free from exploitation of all vulnerable people.

Filming and photographing children and use of children's images for work related purposes

I further agree that, while working with ADFA or engaged in ADFA activities, I must:

- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images.
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain informed consent from the child and a parent or guardian of the child.
- 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; and ensure the 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.

By signing this declaration, I confirm and accept that:

- I shall abide by the ADFA Child Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policies.
- I will abide by the Guidance Notes on Ethical Images and Stories as presented in Annexure 1.
- My failure to comply with ADFA Safeguarding Policies and Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Human Resource Management Policy.
- I consent to photos taken of myself during my tenure may be used by ADFA for promotional or training purposes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Approved by the CEO: Oct 2024

ANNEXURE 1: GUIDANCE NOTES ON ETHICAL IMAGES AND STORIES

In our use of images, both photographic stills and video, and stories from the field, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. Whilst images and stories are an essential means of documenting our work, we strive to maintain the dignity of everyone with whom we work and will not use images or stories that are disrespectful or demeaning. The following **principles** serve as guidelines for personnel taking visual images and documenting stories on ADFA's international medical operations:

- Respect the dignity of the subject.
- Always obtain informed consent when writing stories and or taking photographs or video footage of individuals. Informed consent for taking and using photographs of children will be sought from parents / caregivers or from children directly when they are of sufficient age and understanding.
- Informed consent forms signed by the subjects are required for all images used in ADFA media or communications, except for group photos (non-medical), which have implied consent.
- Wherever appropriate, explain to the subject the likely use of the story or images (ie Annual Report publication or ADFA Newsletter).
- Never take pictures of people who say they don't want to be photographed.
- When photographing Persons with Disabilities, ensure you have their informed consent, and ensure they are portrayed with dignity and respect.
- Do not publish stories or images in scientific journals, the internet, newspapers or other sources that identify an individual or place them in a potentially compromising situation without the permission of that individual. Requirements for verification of permission granted varies from country to country but for images or stories likely to be published we suggest that individuals are either not identified (if the face is included place a bar across the eyes and mid-face) or for images that include surgical pathology of the genitals that permission is confirmed and that the risk of misinterpretation of intent is considered.
- Use images and stories truthfully and do not exploit the subject.
- Do not manipulate the subject in a way which distorts the reality of the situation.
- Be confident that, to the best of your knowledge, the subject would regard the image or story and its use as truthful if s/he saw it.
- Maintain standards of taste and decency.
- Do not use images which are erotic, pornographic or obscene.
- Images depicting naked bodies may sometimes present in a surgical context, however, avoid portraying children in this manner unless it is necessary for reporting or documentation purposes. Board approval required for use of such images.
- When publishing images of a surgical nature, avoid nudity wherever possible.
- Maintain high technical standards – do not crop or digitally enhance an image in a way which misleadingly distorts the reality of the situation and, in video editing, do not misleadingly distort the reality of the situation.
- Be mindful of storing and sharing visual images, particularly when children are depicted in a surgical context.
- File labels must not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images or videos electronically.
- Store your images and stories in a secure file with restricted access.
- Where possible, avoid distributing (ie via email) visual images of children that might identify them or expose them.
- The whole world is on the web including ADFA; all data is kept on the web and is in fact accessible. Ensure the security of all images or stories and avoid public access to compromising or identifying images.
- Be wary when viewing images on your laptop or digital camera in public that images cannot be misinterpreted.