

# Child Protection Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance in relation to contact with children while carrying out projects and other activities for Water East Timor (WET). The policy will assist in:

* preventing the abuse of children in the delivery of WET projects
* contributing to protecting children from abuse in the communities in which WET works
* ensuring that anyone representing WET maintains high standards of conduct in the presence of children.

## Scope

This Child Protection Policy applies to all members of WET, and any person who is engaged in carrying out WET-funded projects and other activities, either in Timor-Leste or Australia.

## Definition

A child is any person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse can refer to physical or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, ill-treatment of children. Child abuse is a crime and must be treated as such.

## Child Protection Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct forms part of the WET policy in relation to child protection.

WET does not tolerate any actions or behaviours that might lead to, or be thought of, as child exploitation and abuse. WET prioritises the welfare of children in all interactions with the Timor-Leste community.

Anyone engaged in WET activities in Timor-Leste or in Australia will:

* treat children with respect
* not use inappropriate language, including language that is harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
* not engage children in any form of sexual activity
* wherever possible ensure that another adult is present when working or socialising in proximity with children
* not use any digital device or social media inappropriately to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material
* not use physical punishment on any child
* not hire children for labour which is inappropriate to their age or development, or interferes with their education or recreational activities, or which places them at risk of injury
* comply with Timor-Leste and Australian legislation, including labour laws relating to child labour.

## Reporting child exploitation and abuse

If a person associated with a WET project or activity becomes aware of an actual or potential child exploitation or abuse situation, they must:

* make a report to the Secretary of WET at watereasttimor@gmail.com or secretary@watereasttmor.org or report the matter to police in either Timor-Leste or Australia
* keep a written record of any actual or potential child exploitation or abuse.

## Risk assessment

WET project activities in Timor-Leste require a risk assessment to ensure that any actual or potential child protection risks have been addressed. Child protection risk assessment is part of the WET planning process, and no project or activity will be undertaken without consideration of the risks of vulnerable children.

## Screening WET volunteers - Australia

All Australian-based volunteers who travel to Timor-Leste as representatives of WET must:

* complete the WET “Fit and Proper Person Test and Declaration”
* provide a satisfactory National Police Check
* have a current Working with Children Check.

These document must be checked and stored securely by the WET secretary prior to any travel on behalf of WET.

## Screening partner staff – Timor-Leste

Those working on WET-funded projects in Timor-Leste must be approved by the Chefe de Suku of the village where the project is occurring, and should also have been screened by police representatives. Every effort will be made to ensure this police screening occurs, however WET recognises that this is not always possible in rural communities in Timor-Leste. Where police screening is not possible a referee report will be sort from the Chefe de Suku of the worker’s home village.

All those working on behalf of WET in Timor-Leste will receive child protection awareness training in Tetun.

## Photos and videos of children

WET will be cautious about publishing images of children, and will only do so where it enhances the goals of WET and where permission has been sought from parents or carers to use the images.

Where children are identifiable in the image, permission from parents or carers must be in writing and must entail informed consent where it is clear that the parents or carers understand the nature of their consent.

## Breaches of this policy

People engaged in WET projects or activities should be aware that breaches of this Policy may be punishable under local laws and regulations.

If WET becomes aware of any breaches of this Policy, action will immediately be taken to remove the person from the WET project or activity, and consideration will be given to reporting to law enforcement agencies.

## Communication

This Policy will be communicated to all those people who are engaged in WET projects or activities.

Members of Committee of Management and Timor-Leste Project Leaders will be required to acknowledge that they have read, understood, and will comply with this Policy.

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| Related policies and documents  | ACNC StandardsWET Code of ConductCVTL (Red Cross TL) Child Protection Brochure in Tetun |